HONORE DE BALZAC'S INFLUENCE ON THEODORE ALBERT DREISER AS REVEALED IN THE SIMILARITIES OF LE PERE GORIOT AND SISTER CARRIE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

The objective of this study is to show the influence that the French writer Honoré de Balzac had on the American writer Theodore Albert Dreiser. The writer proposes to show the Balzacian influence on Dreiser by pointing out the similarities of Balzac's Père Goriot and Dreiser's Sister Carrie.

This work will be divided into four chapters. Chapter one will serve as an introduction and will include a biographical sketch of the two authors. Emphasis will be placed on the events and experiences which influenced or determined their literary production.

Chapter two will consist of an analysis of Père Goriot which will include a brief resume, a discussion of the major themes, the character development, philosophy and moral of the work. The third chapter will consist of an analysis of Sister Carrie which will include a brief resume, a discussion of the major themes, the character development, philosophy and moral of that work. A comparison of the two works with regard to content, theme, character portrayal, and style will be given in the fourth chapter.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Benjamin F. Hudson, whose guidance was indispensable to the successful completion of this study. Sincere gratitude also goes to my husband, Elmer; to Janice and Tyrone, my children; and to my mother without whose patient encouragement this goal could not have been attained.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE LIVES AND WORKS OF HONORE DE BALZAC AND THEODORE ALBERT DREISER

Quite often the experiences of a literary figure influence, to a great extent, his works. It is for this reason that we look into the lives of Balzac and Dreiser. We believe that much insight into the significance and meaning of their works may be revealed in the following biographical sketches.

The atmosphere in which Honoré de Balzac spent his early life contributed greatly to the temperament of his works. He was born on May 20, 1799. He was a native of Tours, though his family of peasent stock had its roots in southern France. The original name was Balssa. The change of name was made by Honoré's father, who migrated to Paris in 1707 to begin a long administrative career, before moving to Tours in 1798 to take up various civil posts. The partitive 'de' was added to the name in 1830 by Honoré, as a claim to noble birth.

Honoré de Balzac had two sisters and a brother all younger than he. His mother, Annie Charlotte Laure Balzac, caused his early life to be very unhappy:

> The measure of suffering inflicted on Balzac by this ill-humored inhibited mother of his, who coldly rejected any display of affection from her children, can be inferred from the bitter cry in one of his letters: "I have never had a mother."[1]

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[1] Stefan Zweig, Balzac (New York: The Viking Press, 1946), p. 9.

He spent six years (1806-1813) as a boarder at the College de Vendôme. His education continued at Tours, then at Paris where the Balzac family returned in 1814.

His schoolmates remember him as "un gros enfant joufflu et rouge de visage."[1] In his autobiographical work, Louis Lambert, we see him as an antagonized boy of genius. An acquaintance who knew him as a young man noted:

> Balzac at that time was particularly and strikingly ugly, in spite of the intelligence which sparkled in his small eyes. A stout, thick set figure, untidy black hair, bony features, a large mouth, and defective teeth.[2]

Balzac was considered a slow student; however, many have concluded that he was not dull, but was bored with his teachers and kept quiet with a feeling of superiority. Because he ranked thirty-second in a Latin class of thirty-three, his mother and other members of his family predicted that he would be a failure. Faced with these premonitions, he completed his studies and attended lectures at the Sorbonne. After his examinations, he worked as a clerk in the offices of an attorney and a notary for three years. These years of apprenticeship spent under Guillonne-Merville were highly fruitful. Maurois gives the following account of incidents, which happened during this time, that had a great influence upon his way of thinking and upon his approach to life:

> He saw a wife bring charges of total incapacity against her husband; a colonel under the Empire returning like a ghost from Germany to find that his wife had

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[1] Ibid., p. 33.

[2] Ibid., p. 33.

> remarried; a thousand living dramas shedding their light upon the baser and, less often, the nobler aspects of mankind.[1]

Mme Balzac treated her older children, Honoré and Laure, rather brutally, though she spoiled her younger children, Laurence and Henri. It is not known, however, why she developed this attitude toward her children. Stefan Zweig explains her reactions thus:

> Perhaps there was a transferred defensive reaction against her husband. It is at any rate certain that scarcely any mother can ever have shown such indifference and lack of affection toward her child. Hardly was her eldest son born before she had him removed from the house as if he were a leper. She was still in child bed at the time. This enfant was handed over to the care of a nurse, the wife of a gendarme, with whom he remained until he was four years old, Even then, however, he was not permitted to return to his parents' house, spacious as it was, but was sent as a partial boarder to a family of strangers. Only once a week, on Sundays, was he allowed to visit his own family, as if they were distant relatives.[2]

Even in his adult years, Belzac could not forget the neglect that he had experienced. He could not banish from his mind the memory of what she had done to him during his early years. The most vivid description of his mother and of her relationship to him is shown in the very moving letter that he wrote to Madame de Hanska:

> If you only knew what kind of a woman my mother is! She is a monster and a monstrous oddity at the same time. At the present moment she is engaged in driving my sister into the grave, after having been the ruin of my poor Laurence and my grandmother. She hates me for a number of reasons. She hated me even before I was born. I was on the verge of breaking with her; it had become almost a necessity. But I prefer to continue to suffer. It is

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[1] Andre Mourois, Prometheus: The Life of Balzac (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 49.

[2] Zweig, op. cit., p. 10.

> a wound that admits of healing. We believed she was mad and consulted a physician who has been on friendly terms with her for thirty-three years. But he said, 'No! She is not mad. She is merely malicious.'...My mother is the cause of all the ills that has befallen me in my life. [1]

Not long after this Honore passed his law examination. His father felt that it was time for him to aid the family financially. He contacted one of his friends concerning a position for his son:

> Passey, a friend of Balzac's father offered to Honore a place in his office, with the prospect of succeeding him in the business on very favorable terms. Soon he would assume the functions of partner to the worthy notary, and when Maître Passey grew old or died his young partner would take sole charge of the office. As against this, however, Balzac protested he would be a man of letters and nothing else.[2]

His sudden announcement that he was to become a writer did not meet the approval of his mother and father. They could not understand his desire to become a writer which was considered a poor way to earn a living. Father Balzac, who had an adventurous nature, consoled himself by looking upon his son in a like-father like-son manner. He, too, had changed positions a dozen or more times. Laure was in favor of his becoming a writer. She loved her brother and the thought of having a famous brother flattered her. In contrast, Mme Balzac's reaction was negative:

> Never! Never! This indolent wretch who had never been any good at school, must not be allowed to indulge foolish fancies that could not earn him his bread. The fees and charges for his legal training had been paid in hard cash. Once and for all a stop must be put to such ludicrous

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[1] Ibid., pp. 10-11.

[2] Honore de Balzac, Pere Goriot, edited by Clara Bell et. al (New York: Dutton and Company, 1910), p. vii.

project.[1]

For the first time in his life Balzac asserted himself. He became a writer in spite of his mother's wishes. His attempt at tragedy in verse, Cromwell, was a failure, and though he wrote a number of dramas in later years, he turned now to the novel. Between 1819 and 1824, he wrote some half-dozen novels. The influence of Rousseau and Scott on Balzac can be seen in these first novels. At the same time, he collaborated with various hack writers in the production of a number of novels that appealed to the reading public.

His first love affair began in 1822 with Mme de Berny, the mother of seven children. Mme de Berny was twenty-two years older than Honoré. It is evident that this love affair played a significant part in his literary productions. It was Laure de Berny who gave him the encouragement that he needed to become a great novelist. He acknowledged:

> She was my mother, friend, family companion, and advisor. She made me a writer, she gave me the sympathy I needed when I was young, she wept and laughed with me like a sister, she came to me everyday like a healing sleep that allays one's pain... Without her I would doubtless have died.[2]

Le lys Dans La Vallée (1833-1836) is an idealized presentation of this love affair.

Balzac later had an affair with the Duchess d'Abrantes, in which love played a minor role. After Mme de Berny, few women, if any, met his expectations. Later, he met Zulma Carraud who played a greater role in his life than the Duchess, but this is not to say that this

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[1] Zweig, op. cit., p. 25.

[2] Ibid., p. 67.

affair, by any means, competed with the affair that he had with Mme de Berny. On one occasion, Zulma wrote to him:

> "I was the only woman destined to you by fate." And he wrote in turn: "I needed a woman like you, and unselfish woman." He confesses to her that, "A quarter of an hour spent with you in the evening means more to me than all the joys of a night in the arms of those beauties."[1]

This affair, just as the one with Mme de Berny, became a platonic relationship. There were other women in his life who were passing fancies. He was linked to George Sand, the unknown Marie and a certain Louise. An association with Mme de Hanske dominated his later years:

> Balzac began a correspondence with Comtesse Evelina Hanska that lasted for eighteen years. For ten whole years, his closest friends had no inkling of her existence. They were married in 1850. On August 17th of that same year, balzac died.[2]

Balzac always wanted to be a prominent rich businessman; however, this eminence was never attained, for all his business ventures ended in disaster. Zweig describes the reason for his business failures thus:

> He refused to learn from experience how to face the very situation of which he showed himself such a sovereign master in his novels, and this simultaneous lucidity and blindness in one and the same brain were never more cleverly demonstrated than in the episode of Balzac's hunt for hidden treasure.[3]

It was with Les Chouans that Balzac made his first distinct success, Later, he devised a giant plan for all of his works, La Comédie

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[1] Ibid., p. 119.

[2] Ibid., p. 215.

[3] Ibid., p. 274.

Humaine. The composition of this massive work occupied much of his life, the first volume appearing in 1829, and the last in 1848. He attempted to create a fictional society that would serve as an illustration and examination of the contemporary society under the Restoration. To this end his novels were grouped according to an elaborate system in which characters recurred from book to book, and events were intertwined.

The categories into which Balzac's novels fall are Etudes de Moeurs, Etudes Philosophiques and Etudes Analytiques. Etudes de Moeurs includes the main part of his work and which is sub-divided into Scènes de la Vie Privée, Scènes de la Vie de Province, Scènes de la Vie Parisienne, Scènes de la Vie Politique, Scènes de la Vie Militaire and Scènes de la Vie Campagne. Among the best known volumne of this all-encompassing study are Eugénie Grandet, Père Goriot, Peau de Chagrin and La Cousine Bette.

La Comédie Humaine is composed of ninety-three novels and short stories. This giant collection required many long hours of hard work. Balzac, fighting sleep and fatigue, worked twelve or fourteen hours each day; however, his work was rewarded. He has been acclained by many literary critics:

> No other writer has written so much in so short a time on such a high level. What is astounding is the quantity of masterful novels and stories by Balzac worthy of everyone's attention.[1]

Balzac, himself, commented on his position:

> French society was to be the historian,

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[1] Beck Beatriz, "Cinquante Ans Seul Dans L'Arène" in Balzac, ed. Jules Bertaud (Paris: Libraire Hachette, 1959), p. 12.

I was only to be its secretary.[1]

Balzac's death was similar to the ending of one of his novels, "l'Avant Propos." Andre Maurois put it very effectively:

> To die when one has reached the goal, like the runner of antiquity! To see fortune and death come together in the doorway. To win the woman one loves at the moment when love is extinguished. No longer to possess the power to enjoy when one has earned the right to happiness. Oh, how many men have suffered that fate![2]

Balzac was buried in the Cemetery Lachaise, a place that he had always loved because of its serenity. It was here that his Rastignac had gazed out over the city and issued his challenge to Paris. It was Balzac's last home; the only one in which he could take refuge from his creditors and find peace. The final words at the graveside were pronounced by Victor Hugo.

Twenty-one years after the death of Honoré de Balzac, Theodore Albert Dreiser, an American poet, playwright, and novelist, was born in Terre Haute, Indiana. Dreiser's life was no less striking than the life of Balzac. An American author, distinguished for his realistic novels of tragic lives, was the son of a German immigrant. His father, after an initial success in the new world, failed in business. Theodore, the twelfth of thirteen children, was reared in poverty.

The father was intermittently unemployed during Theodore's first seven years. The children picked up coal along the railroad tracks and spent long hours delivering laundry that the mother took in to

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[1] Maurois, op. cit., p. 12.

[2] Ibid., p. 550.

earn a few dollars for food. Theodore and his brother were sent home from school one winter because they had no shoes to protect them from the cold. In 1879 the mother and father separated; then, the mother opened a boardinghouse. The following passage showed the humiliation that Dreiser had to endure while his mother ran the boardinghouse:

> Indeed it was the contrast afforded by the lives and circumstances of others that made him dissatisfied with and ashamed of his own, and eventually engendered in him a sense of social and personal inferiority. He became aware of the difference between having less and having more. Many other children had homes in which strangers did not have to be taken. They did not need to carry wash and coal as he, Tillie and Ed did. When he and Tillie trudged along back streets in the early dark with a basket of laundry, h e was nervous as to who might see him...for a while before he was seven years old he was afflicted with stuttering, for which his brothers made fun of him, and he became so fearful and shy that he was easily bullied by other boys...[1]

In Dreiser's early life, he was guilty of a petty theft. The sensitive young Theodore was permanently marked by these early years. They made him aware of the needs of others. Throughout his life he was to speak in behalf of the underdog. Some believe that it was the memory of his childhood that led him toward communism in his later years.

His father was a Catholic, who believed in strict adherence to the Bible. When he was unemployed, which was very often, he would lecture to them on their careless lives and unfaithfulness to God. One of Theodore's sisters ran away to Canada with a married man; she did not know that he was married. The man had stolen fifteen thousand

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[1] Robert H. Elias, Theodore Dreiser: Apostle of Nature (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), pp. 8-9.

dollars that he later returned. This act grieved Dreiser's father because he felt that his daughter had transgressed against his God. Theodore spoke of his father's religion in his autobiography:

> Never have I known a man more obsessed by a religious belief, to him God was a blazing reality.[1]

A brief attendance at the public school in Warsaw, Indiana, and a year at the University of Indiana concluded his formal education. One of Dreiser's teachers, Mildred Fielding, was gracious and sympathetic toward him. She praised his work in school and advised him to read works from Greek, English and American authors. Dreiser took her advice, and became an avid reader. After he was excluded from all the campus fraternities, he vowed never to return. Dreiser retorted, "They can all go to hell."[2]

For twelve years Dreiser was a newspaper man in Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburg and New York, and a free-lance writer of sufficient renown to be listed in the first edition of "Who's Who" in 1899. Through the influence of his brother, Paul Dreiser, Theodore served as editor of the magazine Ev'ry Month, put out by a sheet music publisher. At the age of twenty-seven, Theodore had written nothing that gave promise of him being a writer of consequence. He knew what he wanted to say, but he did not know how to say it. He wanted to promote reforms by influencing America to recognize her deficiencies. Dreiser took the advice of a friend, H. B. Wandell, who told him to read Balzac. He had

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[1] Phillip L. Gerber, Theodore Dreiser (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964), p. 24.

[2] Ibid., p. 42.

never heard of Balzac, when Wandell gave him this advice. "Write it strong, clear, definite," urged Wandell, "and remember Zola and Balzac."[1]

When the advice was given, Dreiser made no haste to heed it, but as he had more encounters and experiences with the many injustices that the poor and minority races faced, he was eager to speak out. This anxiety led him to Carnegie Library in Pittsburg where he discovered Balzac:

> ...I came here and by the merest chance picked up a volume entitled The Wild Ass's Skin by the writer who so fascinated Wandell--Honore de Balzac. I examined it curiously, reading a preface shimmering with his praise. He was the great master of France....I turned to the first page and began reading, and from then on until dusk I sat in this charming alcove reading. A new and inviting door to life had been suddenly opened to me. Here was one who saw, thought, felt....It was for me a literary revolution. Not only for the brilliant and incisive manner with which Balzac grasped life and invented themes whereby to present it, but for the fact the types he handled with most enthusiasm and skill was the brooding, seeking ambitious beginner in life's social political, artistic and commercial affairs (Rastignac, Raphael, de Rubempre, Bianchon)--were, I thought, so much like myself. Indeed, later taking up and consuming almost at a sitting The Great Man From the Province, Père Goriot, Cousin Bette, Cousin Pons, it was so easy to identify myself with the young and seeking aspirants.[2]

Dreiser's discovery of Balzac was the beginning of what some call "the world's worst great writer."[3]

Dreiser married Sara White in 1898. It was believed by some that

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[1] Ibid., p. 42.

[2] Theodore Dreiser, A Book About Myself (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1922), p. 411.

[3] Gerber, op. cit., p. 22.

because Sara had the same name as Dreiser's mother and because she appeared to be sympathetic, he felt that she would be the ideal wife. This may or may not be true; however, the marriage was not a success. Sara refused for forty years to agree to a divorce. Meanwhile, he had formed an attachment with Helen Richardson, a distant relative, who was an inspiration to him. He married Helen after his wife died in 1942.

In the summer of 1899 Dreiser began Sister Carrie and in May 1900 it was published by Doubleday Page and Company. For some reason--probably the horror of Mrs. Doubleday after reading it, the publisher changed his mind about the book. He printed only 1,000 copies and made no effort to promote it in any way. The psychological effect of this disappointment drove Dreiser to a nervous breakdown and the contemplation of suicide. His second novel, Jennie Gerhardt, was more favorably received than Sister Carrie. With its publication in 1911, he decided to devote himself entirely to writing.

In 1837 Dreiser accepted an invitation to visit Russia under the auspicies of the Soviet Bureau of Cultural Relations. Before leaving Russia, he dictated a farewell message to the Russian people:

> He praised the idealistic leaders for sweeping away the power of dogmatic religion, for building better schools, hospitals and living quarters, and for giving 'the collected mentality of Russia freedom to expand.' But he was outraged by the plight of homeless children, disgusted by the ubiquitous filth, indignant at the completely improper ventilation he had consistently had to endure.[1]

During the thirties Dreiser appeared to drift toward communism. Many

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[1] Elias, op. cit., p. 235.

felt that Dreiser became attached to communism because of his antagonism toward the evils of capitalism as he had known them, and out of his compassion for his fellowman:

> He was full of understanding and sympathy for the weakness of others, including drunkards, wastrels, and criminals....[1]

In terms of his literary career and in addition to Sister Carrie and Jennie Gerhardt, Dreiser wrote many other interesting novels. The Financier, first of a trilogy of novels about a business superman, 1912; The Titan, second of the stories followed in 1914; The Genius, a novel which reflected both autobiography and his live for Nietzsche in 1945; A Traveler at Forty and Hoosier Holiday, produced during this same period; The Hand of the Potter in 1918, his first play; Twelve Men, a compilation of sketches of the lives of men whom Dreiser had known, and An American Tragedy, a novel based on the Grace Brown Murder case, are the greatest among his repetoire.

Between Tragic America in 1932, a social commentary, and America Is Worth Saving in 1941, a plea for isolationalism, no book came from his pen. The Bulwark in 1946 and The Stoic in 1947 which were published posthumously, the third of the businessmen trilogy, were Dreiser's final literary works.

On December 27, 1945, Dreiser was suddenly stricken ill. He died the next day. His will provided that after Helen's death, whatever little property might be left should go to a home for Negro orphans.[2]

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[1] Malcolm Cawley, SISTER CARRIE HER RISE AND FALL (Carbondale: Southern University Press, 1945), p. 15.

[2] F. O. Matthiessen, Theodore Dreiser (New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1951), pp. 251-252.

Honoré de Balzac and Theodore Dreiser earned the right to be regarded as literary giants in France and in America, for these two authors produced a series of works that are of intense dramatic and sociological interest, two of which, Le Père Goriot and Sister Carrie will be analyzed and compared in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF LE PERE GORIOT

Balzac was neither a Romanticist nor a Realist, but a transitional figure. A realistic observation and a visionary imagination are the two most striking aspects of his genius. These aspects, along with others, are none the less outstanding in Le Père Goriot.

The setting of Le Père Goriot is in Paris in the 1830's. Old Goriot, a retired flour merchant of means, has given his daughters in marriage to men of rank: Anastasie to the Count Restaud, and Delphine to the Baron de Nucingen. Goriot has taken the best rooms on the first floor of the boardinghouse of Madame Vauquer who considers Goriot a marriage prospect for herself. After two years, when Old Goriot moves to cheaper quarters on the second floor, Madame Vauquer and the other boarders decide that he is an old cheat and a miser. It is in vain that Goriot has explained that the two elegant young women, who on rare occasions have paid him short visits, are his daughters. The common feeling is that they are his mistresses. At the end of his third year at Madame Vauquer's boardinghouse, Goriot moves to still cheaper lodgings on the third floor. After he moves, his young ladies seldom visit him. The other boarders make many jokes concerning the infrequent visits of his female "friends."

One night when the poor law-student, Eugène de Rastignac, returns late to the boardinghouse, he peers through the keyhole of Goriot's door. He finds the old man, with tears in his eyes, melting down

silver plates and sighing "poor child." Eugène's first reaction is that Goriot is a thief, but the words he has heard, the tears he has seen, make him decide not to be too hasty in comdemning the old man. On his way back to his room he hears other noises; muffled footsteps, voices from Vautrin's room, the chink of money, then someone departing. The next day Rastignac learns that Vautrin has seen Goriot selling silver to a money-lender. Neither of these two has any idea that the money is for the Countess Anastasie, whom Eugène has met at a ball the night before.

Later when Rastignac goes to call on the Countess, he sees Old Goriot leaving. Anastasie's husband and her lover are there, too, and after a cool reception he is welcomed when they discover that he is the cousin of the wealthy Mme de Beauséant. His unfortunate mention of Old Goriot results in his visit being cut short. When Eugène leaves, the Count tells the servant that Rastignac is not to be admitted to the house again.

It is Mme de Beauséant and her best friend, Mme la Duchesse de Langeais, who explain to Eugène that Old Goriot has settled his entire fortune on his two daughters, that the girls are now anxious to break all ties with their father and that they obviously would not care to know anyone acquainted with their middle-class past. To make up for the snub her cousin has received at the hand of the Restauds, Mme de Beauséant suggests that Rastignac tell Goriot to invite his other daughter to her home, where she knows Delphine will be only too anxious to be received; Delphine is grateful to Rastignac who is presented to her the next night at the theatre. Delphine invites Eugène to her

home. He accepts and before the evening is over she has enticed him to gamble for her. He wins and she explains to him that her husband keeps her impoverished and that she needs the sum to pay off the debt owed to one of her lovers, De Marsay.

In the meantime, Eugène is concerned about his own lack of funds. At the pension, Vautrin has offered a solution to the financial problem. Their fellow-boarder, Victorine Taillefer, disinherited by her wealthy father, is in love with Eugène, and Vautrin knows this. Vautrin offers to arrange the murder of Victorine's brother so that she can inherit a fortune; then, Eugène can marry her. Eugène has become hesitant about agreeing to the scheme, but now that he has become acquainted with Delphine, he feels the urgent need of money. Vautrin is busy explaining the details of the duel that is to eliminate Taillefer, when Goriot comes in with the news that he and Delphine have set up better lodging for Eugène.

Eugène, now sorry about the crime about to be enacted, tries to send warning to Taillefer by Goriot, but Vautrin has drugged their wine at dinner, and they both, Goriot and Eugène, fall asleep. The next morning, news comes that Taillefer has become mortally wounded in a duel. Victorine rushes off to see her brother. With the death of her brother, her father accepts her as his daughter. It now turns out that two of the boarders, Mlle de Michonneau and Poiret, contact a police agent who suspects Vautrin of being a criminal. They drug Vautrin's coffee and when he collapses, they carry him upstairs. The brand on his body proves that he is the notorious criminal, Trompe-la-mort. The police arrive and, after a violent struggle, take him away.

Goriot is planning to take a room over Eugène's new apartment. The two men are preparing to leave the pension, when Delphine comes to announce that her husband's money is so involved in investments that he cannot settle an independent allowance on her, as Goriot's lawyer had planned. Anastasie also arrives to tell him that her husband has discovered that she has sold the family's jewels to pay her lover's debts; in revenge her husband demands complete control of her dowry. Eugène, who had been listening in horror, took up a bill that Vautrin had signed over to him; altered the figures and made it into a regular bill of exchange. He quickly decided what to do. He made the bill or exchange for twelve francs payable to Goriot. He rushed into Goriot's room and gave the bill to Anastasie.

After this session with Delphine and Anastasie, Goriot finds himself too ill to go out; however, his illness does not prevent his daughters from attending a ball given by Mme de Beauséant. The next morning Goriot is in a serious condition and that afternoon he dies. When Eugène tries to get money from the daughters for a decent burial for their father, they both profess to be too ill to be seen. The following day Goriot is buried in a pauper's grave. The daughters do not come to the burial; they send their carriages as a final tribute to their good father.

There are three interrelated stories in Le Père Goriot: There is the story of Vautrin, an escaped convict; the second story is the story of Eugène de Rastignac and the third and most touching story of the trilogy is the story of the title character, Père Goriot. It is around the third story that this study is centered.

Six years before the beginning of the story, Goriot, a widower of about sixty-two, came to the boardinghouse. He was a successful, retired businessman who immediately produced a favorable impression on the wealth-admiring Mme Vauquer; however, when she discovered that Goriot showed no interest in her, her opinion of him dropped to a very low ebb. Her admiration and inclination for the retired businessman turned into spite and hate. Her first move was to cut off the "extras" at dinner.

The denial of these small favors did not bother Goriot because he was a thrifty and frugal man. His inattentions to Mme Vauquer's little acts of hatred enraged her. She encouraged her lodgers to pester and humiliate him. For sometime Goriot had received visits from his daughters, but the boarders did not believe that they were his daughters. When they no longer came to see him, they laughed at him. They sarcastically implied that as his money decreased so did his relationship to his female visitors. This was affirmed, when Goriot asked to move to the second floor, cutting his rent to 900 francs and doing without a fire in winter. From that day, the formerly respected Monsieur Goriot became Old Goriot. We must note here that 'pere' in French, not only means 'father' but it also suggests the physical and moral degradation of the character.

We are told that after losing his wife, Goriot transferred his love to his daughters and to his business. He spoiled his daughters by bringing them up as if they were aristocrats, hiring private tutors for them, giving them riding lessons and acceding to their every whim. Goriot went so far as to ruin a man who told him, jestingly, that

Delphine had been hit by a carriage.

Goriot lived with his daughters before he moved to the boarding-house. As long as The Republic and The Empire lasted, the sons-in-law, in need of protection, accepted Goriot, his money and his influence, but as soon as the Bourbons came back to the throne, they discarded Goriot because he was a commoner. Goriot's daughters, accustomed to the splendor of an aristocratic, wealthy, independent life, started feeling so ashamed of him that he then decided to move away.

The daughters continued to go to him for money after he moved away. On one occasion, they told him that their husbands had financially ruined them. Goriot was gravely hurt by this news and because he had no more money to give them. The girls violently reproached each other for causing their father's ruin. Goriot became angry with his daughters' husbands and disgusted with himself. As a result of all this, Goriot became gravely ill; later, he died. Thus ends the novel, Le Père Goriot.

This masterful work encompassed three major themes, irrational love and the corruption of society on its individuals. The one dominating theme, however, was money. It was the apparent cause of all the conflicts that the characters experienced. At the outset, Balzac gave us some idea as to the part that money was going to play in the lives of the characters. He told us, in the description of the setting, that the characters were lodged at the boardinghouse according to their means:

> Le premier étage contenait les deux meilleurs appartements de la maison. Madame Vauquer habitait le moins considérable, et l'autre appartenait à Madame Couture, Veuve d'un Commissaire Ordonnateur de la République Française. Elle avait avec elle une très jeune

> personne, nommée Victorine Taillefer... La pension de ces deux dames montait à dixhuit cents francs. Les deux appartements du second étaient occupés, l'un par un vieillard nommé Poiret; l'autre par un homme âgé d'environ quarante ans...et s'appelait monsieur Vautrin. Le troisième étage se composait de quatre chambres, dont deux étaient louées, l'une par une vieille fille nommée mademoiselle Michonneau; l'autre, par un ancien fabricant de vermicelles, de pâtes d'Italie...que se laissant nommer le père Goriot. Les deux autres chambres étaient destinées aux oiseaux de passage, à ces infortunés étudiants qui, comme le père Goriot et mademoiselle Michonneau, ne pouvaient mettre que quarante-cinq francs par mois...[1]

Here prejudices were born because of money. Mme Vauquer's contempt for Goriot increased as the old man's wealth decreased:

> La veuve employa sa malice de femme à inventer de sourdes persécutions contre sa victime. Elle commença par retrancher les superfluités introduites dans sa pension...Plus de cornichons, plus d'anchois: c'est des duperies! dit-elle à Sylvie.[2]

The name "père Goriot," rather than monsieur Goriot was given to Goriot by Madame Vauquer, who felt disdain for him, when she discovered that he had very little money. She and the boarders suspected that he had given away all of his money, but when he asked to move to the second floor, this was confirmed:

> ...monsieur Goriot justifia les bavardages dont il était l'objet, en demandant à madame Vauquer de passer au second étage, et de réduire sa pension à neuf cents francs. Il eut besoin d'une si stricte économie qu'il ne fit plus de feu chez lui pendant l'hiver. La veuve Vauquer voulut être payée d'avance; à quoi consentit monsieur Goriot, que des lors elle namma le père Goriot.[3]

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[1] Honore de Balzac, Père Goriot, edited by Horatio Smith (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), pp. 10-11.

[2] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

[3] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

Delphine and Anastasie can survive only with money. Delphine's concern for wealth can be seen in the following lines, when she admonished her father concerning the way to maneuver her husband:

> Mon cher père! allez-y prudemment. Si vous mettiez la moindre velléité de vengeance en cette affaire, et si vous montriez des intentions trop hostiles, je serais perdue. Il vous connaît, il a trouvé tout naturel que, sous votre inspiration, je m'inquiétasse de ma fortune; mais, je vous le jure, il la tient en ses mains, et a voulu la tenir. Il est homme à s'enfuir avec tous les capitaux, et a nous laisser là, le scélérat! Il sait bien que je ne déshonorerai pas moi-même le nom que je porte en le poursuivant. Il est à la fois fort et faible. J'ai bien tout examiné. Si nous le poussons à bout, je suis ruinée![1]

Eugène almost became an accessory to a murder because he wanted money to enter the aristocratic society:

> Ce démon prit dans sa poche un porte-feuille, et en tira trois billets de banque qu'il fit papilloter aux yeux de l'étudiant. Eugène était dans la plus cruelle des situations. Il devait au marquis d'Ajuda et au Comte de Trailles cent louis perdus sur parole. Il ne les avait pas et n'osait aller passer la soirée chez Madame de Restaud, où il était attendu. C'était une de ces soirées sans cérémonie où l'on mange des petite gâteaux, où l'on boit du thé mais où l'on peut perdre six mille francs au whist.[2]

On his deathbed, Goriot felt that he could be free from worry, if his daughters had no money troubles. His definition for money was: "L'argent c'est la vie. Monnaie fait tout!"[3] When Goriot no longer had money to give his daughters, he withered and died.

After Goriot's death, the lives of Eugène and Bianchon, a medical

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[1] Ibid., pp. 242-243.

[2] Ibid., p. 170.

[3] Ibid., p. 242.

student and friend of Eugène, were even more haunted by the need for money. They were not able to secure burial expense for Goriot from his two daughters. Together, the two students secured a pauper's coffin from a hospital. They also had a vesper read for seventy francs:

> Les deux prêtres, l'enfant de choeur et le bedeau vinrent et donnèrent tout ce qu'on peut avoir pour soixante-dix francs dans une époque ou la religion n'est pas assez riche pour prier gratis.[1]

Even the clergy based everything on monetary gains. Here, Balzac took the opportunity to boldly portray the religious hypocrisy of the 19th century. With men having to buy prayers, it was little wonder that money became the yardstick for measuring love, our second theme.

The only real lasting love in the story of Old Goriot was his love for his daughters. The daughters actions expressed very little love for him. One surmissed at the time that they were introduced into the novel that they were self-centered and interested only in social prominence. On occasions, the younger daughter, showed some tenderness for her father, but even this cannot be said of Anastasie.

Just as they inhumanly showed no love for him, Goriot irrationally displayed his love for them. He expressed this emotion, when he accepted a life at a miserable boardinghouse to see them happy; he drew his securities and spent the money for an apartment for Eugene and Delphine; he ruined a farmer who told him that one of his daughters had been in an accident. This emotion was further expressed when he said that he wanted more than life itself to see them happy:

> Ma vie, à moi, est dans mes deux filles. Si elles s'amusent, si elles sont heureuses, bravement mises, si

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[1] Ibid., p. 301.

> elles marchent sur des tapis, qu'importe de quel drap je sois vêtu et comment est l'endroit où je me couche? ...Un jour vous saurez que l'on est bien plus heureux de leur bonheur que du sien propre.[1]

Goriot wanted to see his daughters happy at all cost. Even if it meant living in adultery, he felt that the happiness of Delphine and Anastasie was worth it. The day that Eugène was to move to an apartment with Delphine, Goriot said, "Voilà la plus belle journée que j'ai eue depuis vos mariages."[2] This love, which had blinded Goriot to all else, caused him to writhe in agony and pain. Eventually, it destroyed him. We sense all along that Goriot was aware of his daughters' ingratitude. He knew that they visited him only when they needed money. They used his money to keep themselves established in a society which measured success by materials gained and by the title placed before a name.

Society played a foremost part in the lives of the characters. Le Père Goriot is in itself a study of society. It depicted a corrupted, cruel society. In order to cope with this society, one had to be alert, shrewd and scheming. Evidence of this was brought out by Eugène, when he asked Mme de Beauséant if he could escort her to Mme de Carigliano's ball. He said to himself:

> ...il devait, comme sur un champ de bataille, tuer pour ne pas être tué, tromper pour ne pas être trompé; où il devait déposer à la barrière sa consience, son coeur, mettre un masque, se jouer sans pitié des hommes, et comme à Lacédémone, saisir sa fortune sans être vu, pour mériter la couronne.[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 141.

[2] Ibid., p. 229.

[3] Ibid., p. 129.

As Eugène saw it, everything was corrupted. For example, it was fashionable to lavish passion upon someone other than your husband. It was understood and accepted that young girls married for wealth and social position rather than for love.

Mme de Beauséant also had some feelings about this society. This is understandable because society had caused her degradation. She lost her lover, the Marquis d'Ajuda-Pinto, to a Mlle de Rochefide. Her best friend, Mme la Duchesse de Langeais, delighted in telling her that the Marquis was getting married. This attitude showed the jealous relationship found in society even among friends. Mme de Beauséant expressed her condemnation of society, when Eugène asked her why old Goriot visited the home of the beautiful Mme de Restaud:

> Le monde est infâme et méchant... Aussitôt qu' un malheur nous arrive, il se rencontre toujours un ami prêt à venir nous le dire, et à nous fouiller le coeur avec un poignard en nous faisant admirer le manche. Déjà le sarcasme, déjà les railleries... Eh bien, monsieur de Rastignac, traitez ce monde comme il le mérite. Vous voulez parvenir... Vous sonderez combien est profonde la corruption féminine, vous toiserez la largeur de la misérable vanité des hommes. Quoique j'aie bien lu dans ce livre du monde, il y avait des pages qui cependant m'étaient inconnues. Maintenant, je sais tout. Plus froidement vous calculerez, plus avant vous irez. Frappez sans pitié, vous serez craint. N'acceptez les hommes et les femmes que comme des chevaux de poste que vous laisserez crever à chaque relais, vous arriverez ainsi au faite de vos désirs.[1]

Delphine and Anastasie, like Mme de Beauséant and Eugène, were victims of this cruel society. Both of them were bound to their lovers. Society had caused the sisters to be jealous of each other. Their jealously caused them to go to all lengths to prove that they could

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[1] Ibid., pp. 93-94.

maintain their social status. This society caused Delphine to ask Eugène, who was almost a stranger to her, to gamble for her. She needed the money to pay her lover, De Marsay. When Eugene won the money that she needed, she described the condition of the women in Paris:

> Voilà la vie de la moitié des femmes de Paris: un luxe extérieur, des soucis cruels dans l'âme. Je connais de pauvres créatures encore plus malheureuses que je ne le suis. Il y a pourtant des femmes obligées de faire faire de faux mémoires par leurs fournisseurs. D'autres sont forcées de voler leur mari: les uns croient que des cachemires de cent louis se donnent pour cinq cents francs, les autres qu'un cachemire de cinq cents francs vaut cent louis. Il se rencontre de pauvres femmes qui font jeûner leurs enfants, et grappillent pour avoir une robe.[1]

Anastasie also had a lover's debt. She stole the family's jewels to raise enough money to keep her lover, Maxime de Trailles, happy. Maintaining lovers proved fatal to Anastasie and Delphine because the lovers were also seeking money and social status. They were less fortunate than Mme de Beauséant who did not have a money problem.

Vautrin expressed his feelings about society, when he tried to get Eugène to become an accessory to a murder:

> Il faut vous manger les uns les autres comme des araignées dans un, attendu qu'il n'y a pas cinquante mille bonnes places. Savez-vous comment on fait son chemin ici? Par l'éclat du génie ou par l'adresse de la corruption. Il faut entrer dans cette masse d'hommes comme un boulet de canon, ou s'y glisser comme une peste. L'honnêtete ne sert à rien.[2]

Naturally, Vautrin, an escaped convict, would condemn society. He later declared to Eugène that everyone advocated virtue; however, very

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[1] Ibid., p. 176.

[2] Ibid., pp. 127-128.

few were virtuous:

> Etre fidèle à la vertu, martyre sublime! Bah! tout le monde croit à la vertu, mais qui est vertuex? Les peuples ont la liberté pour idole; mais où est sur la terre un peuple libre?[1]

In the same conversation, Vautrin criticized society's criminal laws. He continued:

> Pourquoi deux mois de prison au dandy qui, dans une nuit, ôte à un enfant la moitié de sa fortune, et pourquoi le bagne au pauvre diable qui vole un billet de mille francs avec les circonstances aggravantes? Voilà vos lois.[2]

The characters had to adjust to this complex, ruthless society. How well they adjusted determined their success or failure. If their moral code did not coincide with those set by society, they had to change theirs or be crushed by society. It is therefore not surprising that this society often bred irrational unstable individuals as in the case of Goriot, Eugène, Delphine and Anastasie.

Balzac used animal similes and metaphors in describing the behavior of his characters. In the passage below Goriot's actions were like a dog following his master--which symbolized loyalty and love:

> Le père Goriot sait cette parole au vol comme un chien saisit un movement de son maître.[3]

Eugène de Rastignac was given qualities of a bird and of a lion. He took on the wings of a bird, when he received fifteen hundred and

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[1] Ibid., p. 123.

[2] Ibid., p. 131.

[3] Ibid., p. 144.

fifty francs from his relatives:

> Il se passe en lui des phénomènes inouis: il veut tout et peut tout, il désire à tort et à travers, il est gai généreux, expansif. Enfin, l'oiseau naguère sans ailes a retrouvé son envergure.[1]

Delphine and Anastasie had more pleasing animalistic likenesses than the others. Delphine had traits of a nightingale:

> Ne pas aimer bijou de femme, une voix de rossignol, et faite comme un modele.[2]

Of Anastasie, the Comtesse de Restaud, Balzac said:

> La comtesse Anastasie de Restaud, grande et bien faite, passait pour avoir l'une des plus jolies tailles de Paris. Figurez-vous de grands yeux noirs, une main magnifique, un pied bien découpé, du feu dans les mouvements, une que le Marquis de Rouquerolles nommait un cheval de pur sang.[3]

Balzac had many unpleasant names for Mme Vauquer; however, we shall give only one. Her actions in the following lines were like a partridge:

> ...Madame Vauquer se coucha le soir en rôtissant, comme une perdrix dans sa barbe, au feu du désir, la saisit de quitter le suaire du Vauquer pour renaître en Goriot.[4]

Madame de Michonneau was referred to as a worm with the voice of a grasshopper:

> Elle avait la voix clairette d'une cigale oriant

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[1] Ibid., p. 104.

[2] Ibid., p. 142.

[3] Ibid., p. 37.

[4] Ibid., p. 22.

dans son buisson aux approches d'hiver.[1]

Bianchon behaved as thus:

> Kt Kt Kt Kt! fit bianchon en faisant claquer sa langue contre son palais, comme pour exciter un cheval.[2]

Balzac attributed to his characters animal traits or qualities to emphasize his belief that men do not act according to the dictates of reason. According to him most of men's actions were motivated by instinct, which explained the irrationality of so much of human behavior. Thus, irrationality was a dominant trait in many of the characters of the novel; the best example of which was the principal character, père Goriot.

Goriot's irrationality grew out of his love for his daughters. He reared his daughters as if they were aristocrats while he accepted a room at a miserable boardinghouse. Goriot had worked hard to earn his fortune; however, he gave it all to his daughters. He deprived himself of the bare necessities of life, in order to see them happy. He needed clothes, he went for weeks without a haircut or a shave, he spent the winters without heat in his room and he did without proper food all because of his daughters.

Goriot had not always been accustomed to such strict self-denial. He was full of pride and self-esteem, when he first appeared at the boardinghouse. These qualities were brought out in Balzac's description of Goriot:

> Goriot vint muni d'une garde-robe bien fournie, le

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[1] Ibid., p. 13.

[2] Ibid., p. 33.

> trousseau magnifique du négociant qui ne se refuse rien en se retirant commerce. Madame Vauquer avait admiré dix-huit chemises de demi-Hollande, dont la finesse était d'autant plus remarquable que le vermicellier portait sur son jabot dormant deux épingles unies par une chaînette, et dont chacune était montée d'un gros diamant. Habituellement vêtu d'un habit bleu barbeau, il pernait chaque jour un gilet de piqué blanc, sous lequel fluctuait son ventre piriforme et poéminent, qui faisait rebondir une lourde chaîne d'or garnie de breloques.[1]

His vanity was shown when he was teased about his position with the ladies:

> Lorques son hôtesse l'accusa d'être un galantin, il laissa errer sur ses lèvres le gai sourire du bourgeois dont on a flatté le dada.[2]

Goriot's passionate and sympathetic nature was revealed, not only in his personal problem but in his feelings for others. When Madame Couture, Victorine's guardian, told the boarders how coldly Victorine's father and brother had treated her, Goriot replied, "C'est donc des monstres."[3] His concern for her unhappiness can be further seen in the following lines:

> Le viellard oubliat manger pour contempler la pauvre jeune fille dans les traits de laquelle éclatant une douleur vraie la douleur de l'enfant méconnu qui aime son père.[4]

Goriot had resigned himself to being the center of mockery at the boardinghouse. He never argued back at those who jested with him.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 20-21.

[2] Ibid., p. 21.

[3] Ibid., p. 54.

[4] Ibid., p. 58.

The calm spirit with which he took the jesting exemplified a sublime state of humility. Balzac felt that it was an aspect of human nature to load everything on the back of anyone prepared to bear it. He described it, thus:

> Peut-être est-il dans la nature humaine de tout faire supporter à qui souffre tout par humilité vraie, par faiblesse ou par indifférence. N'aimons-nous pas tous à prover notre force aux dépens de quelqu'un ou de quelque chose?[1]

There can be no doubt that Goriot was a prudent businessman who had had much experience in dealing with customers and competitors. During the Revolution he accumulated a fortune by selling flour at ten times the price that he paid for it. As long as the Republic and the Empire lasted, Goriot was a prominent man by his peers and by his sons-in-law. Goriot no longer held his prominent position, when the Bourbons came back to the throne.

His knowledge of human behavior and experience in business was seen in a conversation that he had with Delphine. Delphine's husband had just convinced her that he should manage her fortune. Goriot replied:

> J'ai rencontre des Allemands en affaires: ces gens-là sont presque tous de bonne foi, pleins de candeur; mais, quand, sous leur air de franchise et de bonhomie, ils se mettent à être malins et charlatans, ils le sont alors plus que les autres. Ton mari t'abuse. Il se sent serré de près, il fait le mort. Il veut rester plus maître sous ton nom qu'il ne l'est sous le sien. Il va profiter de cette circonstance pour se mettre à l'abri des chances de son commerce. Il est aussi fin que perfide; c'est un mauvais gars.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 20.

[2] Ibid., p. 94.

Goriot, like all the other characters, felt that money was everything. His reasons for wanting money, however, were purely unselfish. He wanted nothing for himself; he wanted everything for Delphine and Anastasie.

It is not surprising that a love, such as that which Goriot had for his daughters, would end in tragedy. This love was destined to overwhelm him. His pure love for his daughters was unrequited and unappreciated. This fact plagued Goriot until his death.

Throughout the novels, Goriot's only constant friend was Eugène de Rastignac whose character and actions will now be analyzed. Eugène played an important role in all three stories in Le Père Goriot. Eugène came to Paris to attend the College de France. He became fascinated by the well-dressed men and by the procession of carriages on the Champs Elysées. It was not long before he wanted a carriage himself. He soon resolved that he would live like a 'dandy' in high society. This posed a problem for Eugène because he did not have the money to do this. When Eugène came to Paris he came ill-equipped to cope with the high society of the 19th century. He wrote his mother and his sisters for money, when he saw how aristocrats lived and how important money was. His sending for money put a burden on his family who lived on an estate which produced only about three thousand francs a year. His mother sent him money, but her letter left him in tears. This reaction to her letter showed that he was not basically ruthless:

> Quand Eugène eut achevé cette lettre, il était en pleurs, il pensait au père Goriot tordant son vermeil et le vendant pour aller payer la lettre de change de sa fille. "Ta mère a tordu ses bijoux! se disait-il. Ta tante a pleuré sans doute en vendant quelques-unes de ses reliques! De quel droit maudirais tu Anastasie?

> tu viens d'imiter pour l'égoisme de ton avenir ce qu'elle a fait pour son amant![1]

His remorse was soon dissipated when he thought about Delphine and when he thought of the fashionable clothes that he could buy with the money:

> En ce moment le pauvre Méridional ne douta plus de rien, et descendit au déjeuner avec cet air indéfinissable que donne à un jeune homme la possession d'une somme quelconque. A l'instant où l'argent se glisse dans la poche d'un étudiant, il se dresse en lui-même une colonne fantastique sur laquelle il s'appuie. Il marche mieux qu'auparavant, il se sent un point d'appui pour son levier, il a le regard plein, direct, il a les movements agiles; la veille, humble et timide, il aurait reçu des coups...[2]

His kind sympathetic qualities can be seen in his concern for Goriot. When Goriot became ill, Eugène took care of him. When Bianchon, Eugène's friend and fellow medical student, said that Goriot's sickness was interesting from a scientific point of view, Eugène felt that he, himself, was the only one who cared for Goriot out of affection:

> Allons, dit Eugène, je serai donc le seul à soigner ce pauvre vieillard par affection.[3]

Eugène learned that to get along in high society, he had to forget his code of ethics. Because he had little money, he had to scheme in order to become accepted. He never wanted to be a part of anything evil, but he knew that he would have to cheat. He compromised his principles:

> En se débattant contre sa conscience on se disant

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[1] Ibid., p. 100.

[2] Ibid., p. 104.

[3] Ibid., p. 277.

> qu'il racheterait ce péché véniel par le bonheur d'une femme, il s'était embelli de son désepoir et, resplendissait de tous les foux de l'enfer qu'il avait au coeur.[1]

Eugène was taught that duty came before love. This quality of character was brought out when he felt that he and Delphine should not attend Mme de Beauséant's ball. He felt that they should remain with her sick father. This quality of his character which was part of his early training and his family ties impeded his progress toward high society. This can be seen in the following lines:

> Eugène confia le père Goriot aux soins de Bianchon, et partit pour aller porter à Madame de Nucingen les tristes nouvelles qui, dans son esprit encore imbu des devoirs de famille; devaient suspendre toute joie.[2]

Eugène was emotional, sentimental and even naive. He was fascinated by the elegant aristocratic society which placed more emphasis on materials gained than on intelligence acquired. He wanted so badly to enter this society that he found himself yielding to practices that he felt were immoral and distasteful.

Eugène reluctantly accepted an apartment that Goriot had rented for him and Delphine. In order to be near them, Goriot was to occupy a room upstairs. Eugène felt that he was too poor to afford the apartment, but Goriot and Delphine persuaded him to accept. He refused five thousand francs that Goriot tried to give him, but he accepted the money when Goriot told him that it was a loan.

Eugène was shocked when Delphine suggested that her father may be

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[1] Ibid., p. 183.

[2] Ibid., p. 265.

a nuissance to them. Eugène could not understand her ingratitude toward her father. He felt jealous of Goriot, yes, but his feelings were those of a young man who wanted to be alone with his sweetheart.

The day after Goriot became ill Delphine sent for Eugène to accompany her to a ball given by Mme de Beauséant. Eugène wrote to her:

> J'attends un médecin pour savoir si votre père doit vivre encore. Il est mourant. J'irai vous porter l'arrêt, et j'ai peur que ce ne soit un arrêt de mort. Vous verrez si vous pouvez aller au bal. Mille tendresses.[1]

It is evident that Eugène was afraid of losing Delphine and of losing his social status. He left Goriot's bedside and took Delphine to the ball. Delphine's reaction toward her sick father made Eugène think that society was most ruthless. While he dressed to take Delphine to the ball, he thought:

> Il avait vu les trois grandes expressions de la société: l'Obéissance, la Lutte et la Révolte, la Famille, le Monde et Vautrin. Et il n'osait prendre parti. L'Obéissance était ennuyeuse, la Révolte impossible, et la Lutte incertaine. Sa pensée le reporta au sein de la famille. Il se souvint des pures émotions de cette vie calme, il se rappela les jours passés au milieu des êtres dont il était cheri. En se conformant aux lois naturelles du foyer domestique, ces chères créatures y trouvaient un bonheur plein, continu, sans angoisses... il pressentait qu'elle était capable de marcher sur le corps de son père pour aller au bal, et il n'avait ni la force de jouer la rôle d'un raisonneur ne le courage de lui déplaire, ni la vertu de la quitter.[2]

Eugène and Bianchon took care of Goriot without the help of Delphine or Anastasie. In spite of the care that they gave Goriot, he died. The daughters sent their carriages to the burial leaving Eugène

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[1] Ibid., p. 253.

[2] Ibid., pp. 266-267.

and Bianchon to take care of the burial expense. Eugène was appalled at this last act of ingratitude.

Eugène now knew that Vautrin and Mme de Beauséant had told him the truth about society. It was ruthless and corrupted. Eugène saw Mme de Vauquer grasping for money. He listened to Vautrin's murder plot. He saw the jealously which existed between friends and sisters. He saw two daughters desert a father who had given his life for them. These experiences caused Eugène to undergo a complete psychological change. He was changed from an innocent young man from the province to a cynical, conniving man of Paris.

Eugène's irrationality can be seen in his reaction to high society. He was not financially able to become a member of this society, but he wrote home for money that his family did not have. His selfishness can be seen when he contemplated becoming an accessory to a crime to get what he wanted. He saw a beautiful woman and vowed that she must become his mistress, even though she was married. In spite of Eugène's irrational behavior, he was a kind considerate character, as seen in his love and devotion for Goriot. The beautiful woman who was responsible for Eugène's desire to enter high society was Delphine de Nucingen, Goriot's younger daughter.

Delphine was beautiful but naive. Her naivety was seen in her selfishness. She was only concerned with what affected her life. She poured out her heart to Eugène when he gambled for her and won. When she explained the position that women played in society, she revealed that she was aware of the depths of degradation to which she was falling. She said to Eugène:

> Vous m'avez sauvée de la honte et de la mort, j'étais ivre de douleur, Ah! monsieur, je vous devais cette explication! j'ai été bien déraisonnablement folle avec vous. Quand vous m'avez quittee et que je vous ai perdu de vue, je voulais m'enfluir a pied...ou? je ne sais.[1]

When she met Eugène and discovered that he was Mme de Beauséant's cousin, she became interested in him because she had longed to be invited to Mme de Beauséant's ball. Her interest in him soon grew into fanciful love. At the time that she met Eugène, she was on the brink of losing her husband. She had already lost her lover, therefore, she welcomed Eugène.

Her naviety can also be seen when she blamed her financial dilemma and compromising marriage relationship on her father. When her husband involved her property in investments, she accused her father of being responsible:

> Qui, si je suis dans un abîme, il y a peut-être votre faute: nous avons si peu de raison quand nous nous marions! Connaissons-nous le monde, les affaires les moeurs? Les pères devraient penser pour nous. Cher père, je ne vous reproche rien, pardonnez-moi. De mot en ceci la faute à moi. Non. ne pleurez point, papa, dit-ells en baisant le front de son père![2]

She did not intentionally mean to mistreat her father but she was thinking only of her well being. Delphine was not able to exercise much self-restraint. As a result of this, she made many emotional outbursts. These outburst were caused by her vanity and her jealousy toward her sister. Her egotistic behavior was shown when she expressed her love for Eugène. She rejected her family, friends and father. To

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[1] Ibid., p. 156.

[2] Ibid., p. 224.

her, father, friends and family were of little consequence, as long as she was satisfied.

Delphine again showed sympathy for her father after he became terribly upset because of their financial dilemma. She kissed her sister to make her father feel better. She said, "Ma pauvre Nasie, embrasse--moi!"[1] In spite of the weaknesses in Delphine's morals, she was a likeable character. She made an irrational judgment on most decisions, but she was not ruthless, as she did not purposely plan to hurt anyone.

In contrast, Anastasie was cold and calculating. She had an affair with monsieur de Trailles for whom she stole and lied. She stole the family's jewels to raise money for him. When her husband discovered this, he threatened her. She went to her father and confessed everything to him. Anastasie's infidelity was further revealed, when her husband discovered that he was the father of only one of her children. Monsieur Restaud's reactions showed that he had secretly known this but had long since accepted this fact. The following passage was the conversation between the two, when he asked about the children:

> Répondez: "Ai-je un enfant à moi?" J'ai dit oui. "Lequel?" a-t-il demande. Ernest, notre aîné. "Bien," a-t-il dit. "Maintenant, jurez-moi de m'obéir désormais sur un seul point." J'ai juré. "Vous signerez la ventre de vos biens quands, je vous le demanderai".[2]

When Anastasie learned that Goriot's annuities of twelve hundred francs

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[1] Ibid., p. 252.

[2] Ibid., p. 248.

were used to rent an apartment for Delphine and Eugène, she reproached Delphine for having a lover. Delphine assured her that Rastignac was not the kind of young man who would destroy his mistress. This statement made Anastasie angry. The sisters carried on a violent quarrel. During the quarrel, Anastasie revealed her hatred toward her sister:

> Comment t'es-tu comportée moi? Tu m'as reniée, tu m'as fait fermer les portes de toutes les maisons où je souhaitais aller, enfin tu n'as jamais manqué la moindre occasion de me causer de la peine. Et moi, suis-je venue, comme toi, soutirer à ce pauvres père, mille francs à mille francs, sa fortune, et le réduire dans l'état où il est... Voilà ton ouvrage, ma soeur. Moi, j'ai vu mon père tant que j'ai pu, je ne l'ai pas mis à la porte, et je ne suis pas venue lui lecher les mains quand j'avais besoin de lui. Je ne savais seulement pas qu'il eût employé ces douze mille francs pour moi. J'ai de l'ordre, moi! tu le sais. D'alleurs, quand papa m'a fait des cadeaux, je ne les ai jamais quêtés.[1]

She also showed her cruelty as she continued the quarrel. When Eugène heard the quarrel, he rushed into their father's room. This made Anastasie angry, because now Eugène knew her secrets. She accused Delphine of knowing that Eugène was listening. She continued her outburst:

> Delphine, dit-elle pâle et tremblante de colère, de fureur, de rage, je te pardonnais tout, Dieu m'en est témoin, mais ceci! Comment monsieur était là tu le savais! tu as eu la petitesse de te venger en me laissant lui livrer mes secrets, ma vie, celle de mes enfants, ma honte, mon honneur! Va! tu ne m'es plus rien je te hais, je te ferai tout le mal possible...je...[2]

Anastasie, like Delphine was self-centered and cared very little about what happened to her father. When Goriot pondered over where he

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[1] Ibid., pp. 250-251.

[2] Ibid., pp. 253-254.

could raise the money for Anastasie, he thought of taking another man's place in the army. The girls threw their arms around him and said that he must not do it, but the thought drove Anastasie to remark, "Et puis, pauvre père, ce serait une goutte d'eau."[1] This statement suggested that she would agree, if by this way her father could raise enough money for her.

When Anastasie visited her father minutes before he died, she asked his forgiveness:

> Pardonnez-moi père! Vous disiez que ma voix vous rapellerait de la tombe; eh bien, revenez un moment a la vie pour benir votre fille repentante. Entendez-moi ceci est affreux! Votre benédition est la seule que je puisse recevoir ici-bas désormais. Tout le monde me hait, vous seul m'aimez. Mes enfants eux-mêmes me haironf. Emmenez-moi avec, je vous aimerai, je vous soignerai. Il n'entend plus, je suis folle![2]

Anastasie was irrational when she stole the family's jewels to pay her lover, when she had children for her lover and when she continued to antagonize her poor sick father for money.

The four major characters were irrational; however, Goriot's irrational actions were in behalf of his daughters. They were always his first and foremost concern. His love for them was undying. This undying love that he had for his daughters constituted the moral of the work: "Passion does not compromise; it accepts every sacrifice."[3] Goriot's love for his daughters reached the ultimate. When something

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1 Ibid., p. 253.

2 Ibid., p. 296.

3 Maurois, op. cit., p. 256.

concerned the welfare of his daughters, he had no reservations. For them, he paid the supreme price.

The philosophy of the work was centered around the corruption of society. The work itself was a study of a cruel society which suppressed the weak and corrupted the strong. In this society, money was the standard for measuring success. This being so, the masses of people found it very hard to get along, for they had very little money. The majority was forever trying to devise means of getting money and prestige. Some began their search for more money by honest means, but in many instances, many people did not.

Balzac in this novel painted a realistic and sometimes sordid picture of Parisian life in the first part of the 19th century. His ideas and views of society and its evils were reflected in the works of Dreiser and particularly in Sister Carrie, which will be studied in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF SISTER CARRIE

Sister Carrie traces the efforts of a young woman to escape her milieu and to achieve wealth and renown. Her struggles and experiences resemble, in some respects, those of Rastignac.

Eighteen-year-old Caroline Meeber, daughter of a flour merchant, called "SISTER CARRIE" from childhood, is on her way to Chicago. She is seeking a new life which would be materially better than the life she has known in rural Columbus City, where she was reared. On the train she meets a traveling salesman and though she feels that he is a flatterer, she is happy to talk with him. He is dapper, dashing Charles Drouet, who Carrie thinks is very congenial. When they arrive at the station in Chicago, they exchange addresses, and Carrie says that he may call on her. Carrie goes to live with her married sister Minnie Hanson, and her husband, Sven. One look at their miserable apartment convinces her that she cannot entertain Drouet in such a place. Her sister and brother-in-law lead a close, meager life. Carrie is not satisfied at all with her lodging but she is not able to do any better. In order to bear this meager existence, she tries to adjust to this life.

Her first objective is to get a job. In spite of her shyness, she at last succeeds in finding work in a shoe factory. This is an awful experience for Carrie because the work is dull and tiring. The men and women with whom she works are coarse and vulgar, and working conditions are inadequate and the pay is only four dollars and fifty

cents a week. She gives four dollars to Minnie for room and board, and with fifty cents she cannot buy herself any clothes.

That winter Carrie becomes ill because she does not have heavy clothes to protect her from the cold. When she recovers and returns to the factory she discovers that she has lost her job. She goes to look for another job, but she does not find one. Her sister and her brother-in-law have become cool toward her because she no longer has an income. They suggest that she go back to Columbus City. She rejects this advice and continues to look for a job.

One day during her search for a job, she meets Charles Drouet, who recognizes her at once. He insists on taking her to dinner. Carrie feels that he is heaven sent because she is hungry and without money. She gets a glimpse of the type of places where she would like to dine, when she goes to dinner with Drouet. When Drouet offers her twenty dollars, she reluctantly accepts it. Later, she regrets having taken the money and vows to herself to give it back to him on their next meeting. When she tries to return the money, Drouet not only refuses to accept the money, he takes her to a department store and buys her some clothes. Carrie has to hide her new clothes from her sister, who knows that she does not have any money.

Her sister and Sven continue to try to persuade her to go back to Columbus City. When she tells Drouet about it, he offers to rent an apartment for her. At last she accepts Drouet's proposal. She leaves her sister and takes up residence in another part of Chicago. She becomes "Mrs. Drouet" without being married to him. Life with Drouet is different. She now has pretty clothes, small luxuries, ease and no

worry about a job. She feels that she has arrived at a satisfactory standard of living, and since Drouet promises to marry her, she is happy.

G. W. Hurstwood, manager of Fitzgerald and Moy's, an exclusive saloon, is the only friend that Drouet brings to their home. Hurstwood is sophisticated, handsome, mature and suave. The lighthearted Drouet urges Hurstwood to visit Carrie while he, Drouet, is out of town on business. Carrie knows nothing about Hurstwood, except that he is charming. She does not know that he is married and has two teenagers, George, Jr. and Jessica. Hurstwood soon falls in love with Carrie because she is pretty, innocent and unspoiled. The attention that Hurstwood gives Carrie makes her wonder about her feelings for Drouet. She realizes that her feelings for Drouet are feelings more of gratitude than real love.

Drouet's lodge, the Elk, sponsors a play. A young lady is needed to play the leading role. Drouet urges Carrie to accept the role, and he gives her the theatrical name "Carrie Madenda." Her outstanding performance causes both Drouet and Hurstwood to want to marry her.

Mrs. Hurstwood threatens to divorce Hurstwood, when she suspects that he has been deceiving her. He decides to run away with Carrie and they make plans to do so; however, a cleaning woman tells Drouet about Carrie's affair with Hurstwood. Drouet tells Carrie that Hurstwood is married. This shocks Carrie tremendously. She writes to Hurstwood telling him that she never wants to see him again. At the same time Drouet is too hurt by Carrie's ingratitude to continue their relationship, and so, Carrie is now alone. Hurstwood is angered by Carrie's coldness and by his wife's insistent demands for money and

continuous threats of a scandalous divorce which may lead to his business ruin.

The safe at Fitzgerald and Moy's is accidentally left opened one night, and Hurstwood steals ten thousand dollars. The same night he rushes to Carrie's apartment. He pretends that Drouet has been hurt in a wreck and that he must take her to him at once. He manages to get Carrie aboard a train for Canada. On the train he tells her that Drouet has not been hurt and that he has deceived her because he cannot live without her. He asks her to marry him. He does not tell her that he has stolen the money.

Carrie is very disgusted because she has been deceived, but as she thinks over her condition, she consents. The two register in a hotel as Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler, and the next day they go through a wedding ceremony, which Carrie in her naivety, believes to be legitimate. Hurstwood soon discovers that a detective is following him; however, he manages to keep his secret from Carrie. The detective talks with him and he returns the stolen money. After the "wedding" Hurstwood and Carrie leave Montreal and go to New York, where they rent a hotel suite. He later decides that they must move into an apartment because the hotel is too expensive. He cannot get a job and very soon Hurstwood realizes that he has made a terrible mistake. He is determined however to make the best of it because he loves Carrie. He buys a third interest in a saloon. This business venture proves to be a dismal failure.

Carrie becomes more and more discontented with Hurstwood and with her life. Their existence is threatened by their diminishing resources.

When she meets and becomes friendly with a wealthy Mrs. Vance, who moves in the apartment in front of her, Carrie's lack of money becomes painfully apparent. Hurstwood has only seven hundred dollars of his own, for he has returned the money that he has stolen. Carrie is introduced to Bob Ames, Mrs. Vance's cousin. This young man shows Carrie a world beyond that of money and fashion; he shows her the world of culture and taste. The awareness of this new world only causes her to be more discontent with the conditions and poverty of her own world.

Two years after the investment in the saloon Hurstwood is completely ruined. They move to a four room flat. During one of their bitter arguments Hurstwood tells her that they are not legally married, this news is horrifying to Carrie but she feels duty-bound to stay with him. Hurstwood goes out every day looking for a job, but to no avail. Carrie goes to find a job, she has better luck than he, for she finds a job which pays twelve dollars a week. It is on this meager twelve dollars that she and Hurstwood now live.

A strike, of trolley motormen, is called in Brooklyn. Hurstwood gets a position, but feeling in the community run so high that there are continual attacks on the workers. After a few dangerous runs on the trolley line Hurstwood is attacked. Luckily, he escapes with minor bruises.

Carrie has long since ceased loving Hurstwood, and has stayed with him only out of a sense of duty and because she had no place to go. When Lola Osborne, a friend whom she has met while they both worked in a theatre, offers to share her furnished apartment with her,

Carrie leaves Hurstwood.

After leaving Hurstwood, Carrie meets with much success in the theatrical world. She is promoted to leader of the chorus, and later she is given a leading role. It is with great delight that she reads her name in the theatrical column for the first time, "Carrie Madenda." Meanwhile, her salary has been steadily increasing. Following Lola's shrewd advice, Carrie manages to get an even better role in a production which opens that summer. She becomes the star of the show. Although her role is a non-speaking one. All she does is stand about the stage in Quaker dress, frowning. This comic performance makes her famous. Now, her picture appears regularly in the newspapers and at last Carrie Madenda is a celebrity. She signs a new contract for one hundred and fifty dollars a week.

Meanwhile, Hurstwood's condition has deteriorated. He becomes a beggar, gets his lodging and food from missionary workers and wanders around the streets. He spends his last fifteen cents for a rat infested bedroom, turns on the gas and dies. He is anonymously buried in potter's field.

Because she is a celebrity Carrie is now able to live in the Waldorf Hotel. She receives a minimal rate because her name on the list sttracts customers. While staying at the Waldorf, Carrie meets Drouet who tries in vain to renew their old relationship. It is he who tells Carrie about Hurstwood's theft. Now that she is a star having her back would mean much to Drouet because he clamors for social prestige. He begs her to take him back, but she refuses. He is not disturbed at all because Carrie rejects him. He is soon setting up dates with other women.

Carrie meets Bob Vance again and he reminds her of the society in which she has never moved. He considers musical comedy superficial, therefore, he urges Carrie to become a serious actress in dramatic comedy. Carrie thinks about Ames' advice because she believes that there is complete happiness somewhere and she sets out to find it.

There are three interrelated stories in Sister Carrie. There is the story of Carrie, a country girl going to the city to escape a drab way of life. The second story is the story of Hurstwood, a successful businessman who becomes a pauper and a fugitive from justice. The third story is Carrie's success as an actress which leads to wealth and fame.

These three interrelated stories had three major themes: money, corruption of society and irrational passion. The need for money, in order to cope with problems in a society based on monetary gains, was prevalent in each character's life. All of the characters were motivated by the desire to acquire money, the one success symbol that stands above all others. Carrie's definition of money was, thus: "Money is something everybody else has and I must get."[1]

When Drouet treated Carrie to dinner, after she had experienced a long morning of trying to find a job, she further revealed her attitude concerning money:

> She felt a little out of place, but the great room soothed her and the view of the welldressed throng outside seemed a splendid thing. Ah! what was it not to have money? Drouet must be fortunate. He rode on trains, dressed in such nice clothes, was so strong, and ate in

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[1] Theodore Dreiser, SISTER CARRIE (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1927), p. 70.

these places.[1]

The effects of money on Carrie's attitude was shown when she received two ten dollar bills from Drouet:

> Curiously, she could not hold the money in her hand without feeling some relief. Even after all her depressing conclusions, she could sweep away all thought about the matter and then the twenty dollars seemed a wonderful and delightful thing. Ah, money, money, money! What a thing it was to have. How plenty of it would clear away all these troubles.[2]

Money to Drouet was a necessity in order to supply his first essential, good clothes. "Good clothes, of course, were the first essential, the thing without which he was nothing."[3]

The fact that Minnie and Sven, Carrie's sister and brother-in-law, took four dollars of the four dollars and fifty cents that she made on her first job was an indication of their desire for money. When Carrie became ill and was no longer able to work their suggestions that she return to Columbus City brought out their feelings toward Carrie as well as their feelings toward money.

Hurstwood's earlier financial status was seen best through his material gains. He had a home befitting the rich, he had property and had acquired a moderate sum of cash.

Hurstwood was considered a very successful and well-known man about town. He looked the part, for, besides being under forty he had a good stout constitution, active in community affairs, wore fine

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[1] Ibid., p. 67.

[2] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

[3] Ibid., p. 4.

clothes, fine jewels and showed a sense of importance. His money caused Carrie to look on him with much respect:

> Here was this greatest mystery, the man of money and affairs sitting beside her, appealing to her. Behold he had ease and comfort, his strength was great, his position high, his clothing rich....[1]

When Hurstwood stole, Dreiser commented. "When waters engulf we reach for a star."[2] This statement expressed the predicament with which Hurstwood was faced when he needed money. Mrs. Hurstwood was demanding that he give her money or she would take all of his property, and Carrie had written him saying that she never wanted to see him again. Up to this time, Hurstwood had never contemplated stealing, for he felt secure. Money was always important to him but he never thought that it would become an obsession with him.

Mrs. Hurstwood's desire for money grew out of a longing to become a member of the upper class. She demanded money from Hurstwood when she thought that he was giving most of his attention to another woman. Jessica Hurstwood, like Drouet, loved money most for the clothes that it could buy. She was obsessed with the ideas of wearing fine clothes because she felt that the kind of clothes an individual wore bespoke the character of that individual. To Mrs. Hurstwood, money compensated for everything:

> Mrs. Hurstwood had decided not to lose her advantage by inaction. Now that she had practically cornered him, she would follow up her work with demands, the acknowledgement of which would make her word law in the future. He would have to pay her the money which she would now demand

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[1] Ibid., p. 142.

[2] Ibid., p. 279.

or there would be trouble.[1]

The importance of money was evident when Hurstwood and Carrie moved from an apartment in upper New York to one that was less expensive, and then, to a flat that was totally inadequate. This indirect importance of money was also seen when we traced Hurstwood's financial state from Chicago to Montreal, to his not too successful bar in New York, to finding himself unemployed with seven hundred dollars, to fifty cents, to thirty-five cents and to the fifteen cents lodging of his last day.

Dreiser summarized his definition of money and gave its primary purpose, thus:

> The true meaning of money yet remains to be popularly explained and comprehended. When each individual realises for himself that this thing primarily, stands for and should be paid out as honestly, stored energy, and not as a usurped privilege--many of our social, religious, and political troubles will have permanently passed.[2]

Money and what it could buy, without a doubt motivated all of the characters in the novel. But what gave money this eminent status? The answer to this question will lead us into the second theme, the corruption of society. In Sister Carrie, Dreiser showed us how society literally impelled man toward the zeal for more money, more excitement and more success. It was these forces which impelled Carrie to go to Chicago. She was "quick to understand the keener pleasures of life, ambitious to gain in material things."[3] Soon after Drouet

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[1] Ibid., p. 254.

[2] Ibid., p. 70.

[3] Ibid., p. 3.

was introduced into the novel, we saw that society had made its imprints on him, for he loved fine clothes, good food, and particularly the company and acquaintance of successful men.

Another example of how society impelled man was shown when Drouet gave Carrie twenty dollars and said, "Get yourself some clothes."[1] Even though, he wounded her pride, he had made a stupendous statement for here he said, "clothes make the man."

According to Dreiser, the American society of the 1900's constantly concentrated upon money values. This society produced insecure, indecisive individuals. Everyone was ambitious to gain in money and materials at the cost of everyone else. What was most cruel to Dreiser was an individual who had become so blinded by ambition that he could not look back to lend a hand to those below him. This was brought out during the Elk benefit performance. Drouet's lodge the Elk, sponsored a play, 'Under the Gaslight,' in which Carrie was given the leading role. One of the characters had the following lines in his script:

> It means that society is a terrible avenger of insult. Have you ever heard of the Siberian wolves? When one of the pack falls through weakness, the others devour him...[2]

Irrational passion, the third theme, was displayed by Hurstwood. Carrie, Drouet and Mrs. Hurstwood had very little love for anyone. Carrie was fond of Drouet because he was there when she needed him. Drouet was sympathetic to Carrie because it was in his nature to be kind to everyone. Mrs. Hurstwood did not love her husband, but she

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[1] Ibid., p. 69.

[2] Ibid., pp. 200-201.

wanted his money.

Carrie loved Drouet's kindness and the way he dressed but nothing else about him appealed to her, particularly after she had met Hurstwood. Carrie's feelings for Drouet were expressed in the following passage:

> She gave him credit for his good looks, his generous feelings, and even, in fact, failed to recollect his egotism when he was absent; but she could not feel any binding influence keeping her for him as against all others.[1]

When Drouet was out of town on business, Hurstwood visited Carrie. Hurstwood had, from the beginning, made a favorable impression on Carrie. On his first visit to see Carrie when Drouet was away, his glance intrigued her. He did not speak of love but their eyes accidently met and then she felt as she had never felt before. Dreiser felt that glances were more effective than the spoken word. To him words were not always necessary to express an emotion. He said:

> People in general attach too much importance to words. They are under the illusion that talking affects great results. As a matter of fact, words are, as a rule, the shallowest portion of all the argument. They but dimly represent the great surging feelings and desires which lie behind. When the distraction of the tongue is removed, the heart listens.[2]

One afternoon after Hurstwood's first visit to see Carrie while Drouet was away, he found Carrie getting ready to take a walk. Hurstwood went along and before the evening was over, he tenderly expressed his love for her. Carrie said nothing, but her reactions show that

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[1] Ibid., p. 130.

[2] Ibid., p. 130.

she was pleased with it:

> Carrie in her room that evening was in a fine glow physically and mentally. She was deeply rejoicing in her affection for Hurstwood and his love, and looked forward with fine fancy to their meeting.[1]

The next day after the performance of 'Under the Gaslight,' Carrie had a meeting with Hurstwood. During the conversation, she confessed her love for him:

> --"How can you act this way, dearest?" he inquired, after a time. "You love me, don't you?" He turned on her such a storm of feeling that she was overwhelmed. For the moment all doubts were cleared away. --"Yes," she answered, frankly and tenderly.[2]

The love that Carrie had for Hurstwood was not lasting. She was deeply hurt when Drouet told her that Hurstwood was married and had two teenagers. The knowledge of Hurstwood's perfidy wounded her. She wrote to him:

> "You do not need to have me explain why I did not meet you," ... How could you deceive me so? You cannot expect me to have anything more to do with you. I wouldn't under any circumstances. Oh, how could you act so?... "You have caused me more misery than you can think. I hope you will get over your infatuation for me. We must not meet anymore. Good-bye."[3]

Of course, we know that she saw him again because Hurstwood abducted her and ran away to Canada and from Canada to New York. Hurstwood again deceived her. He told her that Drouet was wounded and needed her.

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[1] Ibid., p. 145.

[2] Ibid., p. 223.

[3] Ibid., p. 277.

Drouet, the first man in Carrie's life, loved only himself. Drouet was concerned for others but his greatest interest was in fine clothes. He was a dandy, who paid much attention to all women and particularly to their dress. He was associated with many young women but was not deeply in love with any one of them. He liked Carrie as he liked any other girl that he met.

There was no love lost between Mrs. Hurstwood and her husband. Yet, there was no great feeling of dissatisfaction. They had conditioned themselves to endure each other, even though, they were often in disagreement.

Hurstwood, on the first visit to see Carrie while Drouet was away, felt that Carrie was sweet and innocent. His reasons for visiting her were purely honorable, he had no intentions of falling in love with her. The following passage showed that he had very little interest in women when he met Carrie:

> ...his experiences with women in general had lessened his cynical attitude, well grounded on numerous experiences. Such women as he had known were of nearly one type, selfish, ignorant, flashy.[1]

With this kind of attitude toward women; we can hardly see Hurstwood involved in a family problem brought on by another woman. However, on his second visit to see Carrie their relationship became more intimate. His reaction showed how individuals were impelled by forces beyond their control.

Later, as a victim of these forces, Hurstwood fell in love with Carrie:

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[1] Ibid., p. 134.

> The manager was beside himself with affection. He could have sold his soul to be with her alone. "Ah," he thought "the agony of it."[1]

He did not always express his love for Carrie; however, his feelings continued:

> Passion in a man of Hurstwood's nature takes a vigorous form. It is no musing, dreary thing. There is none of the tendency to sing outside my lady's window--to languish and repine in the face of difficulties. In the night he was long getting to sleep because of too much thinking, and in the morning he was early awake, seizing with alacrity upon the same dear subject and pursuing it with vigour.[2]

When he deceived Carrie into getting aboard a train with him, he pleaded to her to stay with him. Carrie remained with him out of sympathy, or perhaps because she liked to be pursued. Regardless to the reason, she stayed and vowed to make the most of it.

Hurstwood was not concerned with anything around him which did not involve Carrie. He was always pre-occupied with thoughts of Carrie. He was not prone to arguing or excessive talking, but he was somewhat a romantic. He was capable of strong emotion which caused him to become pathetic and destitute. This strong emotion eventually caused his death.

Hurstwood's death was brought about by similar circumstances as was Goriot's death. Irrational love destroyed both of them. This trait of irrationality in characters was not the only thing that Balzac and Dreiser had in common. Dreiser, like Balzac, used animal similies to intensify his descriptions. He, too, did this to emphasize his

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[1] Ibid., p. 210.

[2] Ibid., p. 211.

belief that man's actions are motivated by instinct as in the case of Carrie, Hurstwood, Drouet and Mrs. Hurstwood. Note the animal similes in the following passages. He said that Carrie, "a half equipped little knight"[1] from Columbus City, was like the sheep:

> Carrie was unwise, and therefore, like the sheep in its unwisdom, strong in feeling.[2]

In describing Drouet, the traveling salesman, Dreiser said:

> In his good clothes and fine health, he was a merry unthinking moth of the lamp.[3]

The likeable, shrewd Hurstwood in his earlier days, was depicted, thus:

> He was merely floating those gossamer threads of thought which, like the spiders he hoped would lay hold somewhere.[4]

In Hurstwood's later life, Dreiser portrayed him as a pitiful creature. The following passage described Hurstwood and a long line of derelicts as they stood gazing at the door knob of one of the charity houses:

> They looked at it as dumb brutes look, as dogs paw and whine and study the knob... Hurstwood who could not get in the centre, stood with head lowered to the weather and bent his form.[5]

Dreiser, describing Mrs. Hurstwood when she felt that Hurstwood was being unfaithful, said:

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1 Ibid., p. 3.

2 Ibid., p. 72.

3 Ibid., p. 71.

4 Ibid., p. 117.

5 Ibid., p. 553.

> Mrs. Hurstwood felt something, sniffing change, as animals do danger, afar off.[1]

Sven Hanson, Carrie's brother-in-law was described in the same manner as Bianchon:

> The only implication of his thoughts came in the form of a little clicking sound made by his tongue; the sound some people make whey they wish to urge on a horse.[2]

According to Dreiser, all human beings could be described with animal similes or metaphors. He said, "We are insects produced by heat, and pass without it."[3] He later declared:

> We must remember that it may not be a knowledge of right, for no knowledge of right is predicated of the animals instinctive recoil at evil. Men are still led by instinct before they are regulated by knowledge.[4]

In addition to stating the use of animal similes and metaphors in Dreiser's characters, an analysis of each will be given. The analyses will begin with Carrie, the title character.

When Carrie was introduced into the novel, Dreiser said that when a girl leaves home at the age of eighteen, she either falls into saving hands and become better, or she takes on the cosmopolitan standard and becomes worst. With this statement, he foreshadowed Carrie's future. Carrie's impression of clothes was also given at the beginning

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1 Ibid., p. 227.

2 Ibid., p. 84.

3 Ibid., p. 104.

4 Ibid., p. 287.

of the novel. This impression also foreshadowed her destiny. Clothes greatly influenced her:

> Carrie was an apt student of fortune's ways... of fortune's superficialities. Seeing a thing, she would immediately set to inquiring how she would look, properly related to it. Be it known that this is not fine feeling, it is not wisdom. The greatest minds are not so afflicted: and on the contrary, the lowest order of mind is not so disturbed. Fine clothes to her were a vast persuasion; they spoke tenderly and jesuitically for themselves. When she came within earshot of their pleading, desire in her bent a willing ear.[1]

Carrie was not capable of intentional viciousness. She revealed this quality of character, when she reflected on what both Hurstwood and Drouet had done for her. She was depressed because she hated to mistreat anyone who had been kind to her. She felt bound to Drouet, even though, she was enamored of Hurstwood:

> She owed something to Drouet, she thought. It did not seem more than yesterday that he had aided her when she was worried and distressed.[2]

Her sympathetic attitude toward Hurstwood was shown in the way that she worked and provided for the two of them when he could not find work. She finally left him, but she left thinking that Hurstwood was not trying to get a job:

> "Why don't he get something?" she said openly to herself. "If I can he surely ought to. It wasn't very hard for me."[3]

Her compassion for Hurstwood was also revealed in her reaction to the

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[1] Ibid., p. 111.

[2] Ibid., p. 130.

[3] Ibid., p. 422.

news that Hurstwood had stolen ten thousand dollars:

> Carrie looked vacantly at the richly carpeted floor. A new light was shining upon the years since her enforced flight. She also imagined that he took it on her account. Instead of hatred springing up there was a kind of sorrow generated. Poor fellow! What a thing to have hanging over his head all the time.[1]

Carrie's experiences with Hurstwood and Drouet revealed that she was easily deceived. Drouet promised to marry her and she readily believed him. Hurstwood promised to marry her and she believed him. In spite of these disappointments, she was quick to forget her lovers and move on to other pursuits. She was able to adjust to any situation in which she found herself, as in the case of poverty. Poverty was no new thing to her because she grew up with it. She knew what it meant to be cold, hungry and ragged. These experiences account for her reactions when she became successful:

> Adulation, being new in any form, pleased her. Only she was sufficiently wise to distinguish between her old condition and her new one. She had not had fame or money before, now they had come. She had not had adulation and affectionate propositions before. Now they had come. Wherefore? She smiled to think that men should suddenly find her so much more attractive. In the least way, it incited her coolness and indifference.[2]

Carrie clamored for money and fame because they represented the success for which she strove. She was always willing to listen to anyone who had suggestions to make toward her success. When Ames discussed the fine arts with Carrie, he incited an intellectual bent in her that she never forgot. His discussion of the arts helped her to appreciate

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[1] Ibid., p. 530.

[2] Ibid., p. 503.

them. When she became a celebrity, she thought about Ames' conversation with her:

> In her comfortable chambers at the Waldorf, Carrie was reading at this time Père Goriot, which Ames had recommended to her. It was so strong, and Ames's mere recommendation had so aroused her interest, that she caught nearly the full sympathetic significance of it. For the first time, it was being borne in upon her how silly and worthless had been her earlier reading, as a whole.[1]

Through reading and frequenting famous places, Carrie tried to find happiness, however, at the end of the novel, she had not yet found complete happiness. She sat by her window, neither worried nor completely content, dreaming of happinesses which she had never experienced. Dreiser commented on Carrie's discontentment in the last statement in the novel:

> It is when the feet weary and hope seems vain that the heartaches and the longings arise. Know, then, that for you is neither surfeit nor content... In your rocking-chair, by your window, shall you dream such happiness as you may never feel.[2]

Carrie acted irrationally by the way that she allowed her strong desire to escape her environment dazzle her. She permitted Drouet to provide an apartment for her and she carried on an affair with Hurstwood, Drouet's best friend. It was also irrational to judge character by clothes. Her attitudes and interests were similar to those of Drouet, the first man in Carrie's life.

Drouet was a vain superficial character who loved fine clothes. He was kind and sympathetic. Some may argue that Drouet was conniving

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[1] Ibid., p. 548.

[2] Ibid., p. 557.

and helped Carrie only because he thought that his kindness toward her was advantageous to him. On this point Dreiser wrote:

> To her and indeed to all the world, he was a nice, good-hearted man. There was nothing evil in the fellow. He gave her the money out of a good heart--out of a realization of her want.[1]

It was a part of Drouet's nature to help those in need. When Carrie, Hurstwood and he left the theatre one night, they were approached by a beggar. The beggar was ignored by the others, but Drouet gave him a coin.

Drouet was always well-dressed and in happy spirits. He loved well-dressed women and lavished much attention on them:

> Drouet had a habit, characteristic of his kind, of looking after stylishly dressed or pretty women on the street and remarking upon them. He had just enough of the feminine love of dress to be a good judge--not of intellect, but of clothes.[2]

In this respect, he was like Carrie. They always saw the clothes before they saw the individual.

When Drouet discovered that 'Carrie Madenda' had become successful, he went to see her. He thought that maybe they could renew their old acquaintance, but he found that Carrie was not interested. His feelings of regret lasted only a short while. He was a 'dandy' who could always attract other young ladies. He put on a good appearance and continued his pursuit of pleasure.

Drouet was in many respects the opposite of Hurstwood, who was the second man in Carrie's life. When we met Hurstwood, he was highly

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1 Ibid., p. 71.

2 Ibid., p. 112.

respected by his peers. His actions in the novel were at all times the opposite of those of Carrie's; he descended socially while Carrie ascended socially.

Hurstwood, like Carrie and Drouet, loved clothes, but his love was not for the flashy gaudy type that Drouet wore. A vivid account of his clothes was given when Carrie noticed the contrast between his clothes and those of Drouet:

> He was in the best form for entertaining this evening. His clothes were particularly new and rich in appearance. The coat lapels stood out with that medium stiffness which excellent cloth possesses. The vest was of rich Scotch plaid, set with a double row of round mother-of-pearl buttons. His cravat was a shiny combination of silken threads, not loud, not inconspicuous. What he wore did not strike the eye so forcibly as that which Drouet had on but Carrie could see the elegance of the material. Hurstwood's shoes were of soft, black calf, polished only to a dull shine. Drouet wore patent leather but Carrie could not help feeling that there was a distinction in favour of the soft leather, where all else was so rich.[1]

The great influence that Hurstwood had over his peers was seen, when Carrie was given a part in a benefit play sponsored by the Elk. Hurstwood wanted to make sure that a representative audience was present:

> He had given the word among his friends--and they were many and influential--and here was something which they ought to attend, and as a consequence, the sale of tickets by Mr. Quincel, acting for the lodge, had been large. These he had arranged for by the aid of one of his newspaper friends on the "Times," Mr. Henry McGarren, the managing editor.[2]

Some of Hurstwood's personality traits and his position as a businessman

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[1] Ibid., p. 107.

[2] Ibid., p. 189.

were further described:

> Hurstwood was an interesting character after his kind. He was shrewd and clever in many little things and capable of creating a good impression... He had a little office in the place, set off in polished cherry and grill-work, where he kept, in a roll-top desk, the rather simple accounts of the place--supplies ordered and needed.[1]

Hurstwood's marital life was not always very pleasant. Nevertheless, Hurstwood was a dedicated husband and father. The following passage provided proof of this:

> There was no love lost between them. There was no great feeling of dissatisfaction. Once in a while he would meet a woman whose youth, sprightliness and humour would make his wife seem rather deficient...but he could not complicate his home life because it might affect his relations with his employers... A man, to hold his position must have a dignified manner, a clean record, a respectable home anchorage. Therefore he was circumspect in all he did, and whenever he appeared in the public ways in the afternoon, or on Sundays, it was with his wife and sometimes his children.[2]

It was surprising that a man like Hurstwood, who felt so strongly about duty to family found himself in a maze of embarrassing situations related to his love life. When any of his friends became involved in a marital problem, he would disapprove their actions. Hurstwood, himself, became a victim of the very thing which he disapproved.

He met Carrie and fell in love with her. When he first became involved with Carrie, he thought that he would be happy forever. This happiness, however, was short lived, for soon after he abducted Carrie, he realized his mistake:

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[1] Ibid., p. 49.

[2] Ibid., pp. 97-98.

> As for Hurstwood, he was making fight against the difficulties of a changed condition. He was too shrewd not to realise the tremendous mistake he had made, and appreciated that he had done well in getting where he was, and yet he could not help contrasting his present state with his former, hour after hour, and day after day.[1]

Hurstwood faced many problems in trying to find work. Many people took him to be better off than he was because of his expensive clothes. His age also posed a problem for him in finding work. He was not an old man; however, Dreiser showed that it was even difficult for a middle-age man to secure a decent job in the early 19th century. America was becoming a growing industralized country which afforded very few jobs for unskilled laborers.

The circumstances of Hurstwood's theft emphasized the fact that he did not plan this crime. Dreiser went on at length to convince the reader that Hurstwood was a victim of forces beyond his control:

> He was drawn by such a keen desire for Carrie, driven by such a turmoil in his own affairs that he thought constantly it would be best and yet he wavered. He did not know what evil might result from it... After he had all the money in a hand bag, a revulsion of feeling seized him. He would not do it--no! Think of what a scandal it would make. The police! They would be after him. He would have to fly and where? Oh, the terror of being a fugitive from justice! He took out the two boxes and put all the money back. In his excitement he for got what he was doing, and put the sums in the wrong boxes. As he pushed the door to, he thought he remembered doing it wrong and opened the door again. There the two boxes were mixed.
>
> He took them out and straightened the matter, but now the terror had gone. Why be afraid?
>
> While the money was in his hands the lock clicked. It had sprung! Did he do it? He grabbed at the knob and pulled vigorously. It had closed. Heaven! he was in for it

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[1] Ibid., p. 329.

now, sure enough.[1]

Hurstwood felt regret immediately after the theft. After he had abducted Carrie and was on his way to Canada, one thought continued to plague him, what a fool he was. Fitzgerald and Moy employed a detective to find him. The detective found him in Canada where Hurstwood told him that he had already written to his employers. He had not written them but he did so immediately:

> Sitting in his room with Carrie the same day, he decided to send the money back. He would write Fitzgerald and Moy, explain all, and then send it by express, maybe they would forgive him.[2]

Hurstwood suffered a personal tragedy. His downward trek from fifty cents to thirty-five cents to fifteen cents for a room in the Bowery showed the final pathetic state to which he was reduced. He was even reduced to begging. Hurstwood's attempt to beg gravely shocked his pride and made him more aware and ashamed of his predicament. The following lines described his first attempt at begging:

> He strolled about sizing up people, but it was long before just the right face and situation arrived. When he asked, he was refused. Shocked by this result, he took an hour to recover and then asked again. This time a nickel was given him. By the most watchful effort he did get twenty cents more, but it was painful.[3]

To Hurstwood, life had always been a precious thing, but in the state in which he now existed, it had little or no meaning. He was

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[1] Ibid., pp. 288-289.

[2] Ibid., p. 315.

[3] Ibid., p. 515.

accustomed to the miserable waiting lines for charitable offerings, perhaps a cup of coffee and some stale bread.

When Hurstwood failed to find a job, he knew that all hope was gone. He begged fifteen cents and went to one of the charity houses. The following passage gives an account of Hurstwood's death:

> Hurstwood laid down his fifteen cents and crept off with weary steps to his alloted room. It was a dingy affair--wooden, dusty, hard. A small gas-jet furnished sufficient light for so rueful a corner.... After a few moments, in which he reviewed nothing, but merely hesitated, he turned the gas on again, but applied no match... When the odour reached his nostrils, he quit his attitude and fumbled for the bed.
>
> "What's the use?" he said, weakly, as he stretched himself to rest.[1]

Because of his irrational passion, Hurstwood stole money, left his family, abducted Carrie and instigated a false marriage. In the end his irrational passion caused his death. Hurstwood, up until he met Carrie, was too concerned with his job and his social position to get involved with other women. He felt that he could not complicate his home life, even though, he was not always pleased with Mrs. Hurstwood's actions. When he met Carrie and fell in love with her, his attitude toward women changed. He was no longer the strong-willed man who placed his job and social position before getting involved with a woman. His degradation showed how society could impel men to become victims of horrible fate. Even though Hurstwood's degradation was brought about because of his own actions, Mrs. Hurstwood contributed much to his dilemma.

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[1] Ibid., p. 554.

Julia Hurstwood "was the type of woman who has ever endeavored to shine and has been more or less chargrined at the evidences of superior capability in this direction elsewhere. Her knowledge of life extended to that little conventional round of society of which she was not but-longed to be - a member."[1]

Mrs. Hurstwood was vain and self-centered. She was always showily dressed in fine clothes and jewelry. She showed that she was self-centered in her constant desire to be associated with the members of high society. When she realized that she would never reach her social aims on her own merits, she turned to Jessica. She succeeded in getting Jessica married to a member of high society.

She first noticed that Hurstwood was neglecting her, when he began going out alone. Even without proof she felt that he was seeing another woman:

> She had too little faith in mankind not to know that they were erring. She was too calculating to jeopardize any advantage she might gain in the way of information by fruitless clamour. Her wrath would never wreak itself in one fell blow. She would wait and brood, studying the details and adding to them until her power might be commensurate with her desire for revenge. At the same time she would not delay to inflict any injury, big or little, which would wound the object of her revenge and still leave him uncertain as to the source of the evil. She was a cold, self-centered woman, with many a thought of her own which never found expression, not even by so much as the glint of an eye.[2]

The day after the Elk benefit play, Mrs. Hurstwood went to the races. She met Dr. Beale, the family physician, who remarked that she

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[1] Ibid., p. 64.

[2] Ibid., p. 123.

did not speak to her old friend while out riding with her husband. This astonished her for she nor Jessica had been out riding with Hurstwood lately. Later, the same afternoon, she met another of Hurstwood's friends. He expressed his regret that she was not able to attend the Elk benefit play because of illness. Hurstwood had not told her about the play, nor had she been ill.

This news, along with the news from Dr. Beale, enraged her. She strove, however to keep her feelings unnoticed. That night when Hurstwood came home, they quarreled. He denied all of her accusations, but she did not believe him. She demanded money or else she would ruin him. Hurstwood stated that she could do as she pleased, then he left the house. He spent the night at a hotel down town.

The next day she locked Hurstwood out of the house and moved to a hotel so that he could not see her. She secured a lawyer who wrote Hurstwood threatening letters concerning money matters. Hurstwood found that she made greater and greater demands of him, demands that he could not meet. Her demands led him to steal ten thousand dollars.

Mrs. Hurstwood's weaknesses and the weaknesses found in Carrie, Hurstwood and Drouet were never judged by Dreiser. He looked upon them with a sympathetic attitude. Carrie led an immoral life, Hurstwood stole, Drouet lived with Carrie under the pretense of being her husband and Mrs. Hurstwood took all of her husbands earnings; yet, Dreiser did not condemn them. His attitude toward the characters' actions was due partly to experiences that he had encountered in his own early life.

The philosophy of Sister Carrie is that society impels man to

aspire for more money, more pleasure, and more success and if man is not successful at either of the three, society condemns him. Carrie goes to Chicago to become a member of a more affluent society; Hurstwood is crushed by society; Mrs. Hurstwood is obsessed with becoming a member of high society, and Drouet is forever in pursuit of the pleasures of society. The degradation or the success of each character is determined by society.

If a society measured all of its inhabitants by the same yardstick, in this case, how much money they had, it was destined to crumble. This was the moral of Sister Carrie. Dreiser felt that society was conducive to breeding immorality and crime. Man was not always responsible for his crime as in the case of Hurstwood's theft. Man was not always responsible for his moral degradation as in the case of Carrie. Dreiser also portrayed the poor working conditions and the inadequate pay that the common laborer had to endure. When the common laborer was not able to get a job, he could always become a beggar and live in a charity house. Dreiser deplored these conditions. Carrie worked in a shoe factory for four dollars and fifty cents a week. The hours were long, the work was hard and the working conditions were hazardous. To Dreiser, it was "a rich get richer and a poor get poorer" situation. To him, this society which preached virture on one hand, bred vice on the other:

> Society possesses a conventional standard whereby it judges all things. All men should be good, all women virtuous. Wherefore villain, hast thou failed?[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 101.

Dreiser thought that this position was hypocritical. He was among the first American writers to let this be known. He did not receive much acclaim, when his writings were first introduced into this society. Individuals did not think it very kind to have their faults laid open to criticism.

Dreiser's feelings about society were not peculiar only to him. Numerous European writers had written many realistic works deploring society. Among them was Honoré de Balzac. The similarities of Père Goriot and Sister Carrie disclose the influence that Balzac had on Dreiser. The following chapter, a comparison of the two works which includes their content, theme, character portrayal and style, reveals the extent of influence that Balzac had on Dreiser.

CHAPTER IV

A COMPARISON OF PERE GORIOT AND SISTER CARRIE

Balzac and Dreiser used autobiographical sources in their works. These sources can be seen through the novels. For example, in Dreiser's early life, he was guilty of a theft. This may account for his long discussion to prove that Hurstwood was not totally responsible for the theft that he committed. Hurstwood's increasing loss of social status and initiative was similar to experiences that Dreiser's father had encountered. The life that Sister Carrie led was similar to the life of one of Dreiser's sisters, who eloped to Canada with a married man who had stolen fifteen thousand dollars. The man returned the money later, as did Hurstwood. The strike of trolley motormen that Dreiser described in Sister Carrie resembled one that he covered when he was a newspaper reporter. When Dreiser first went to Chicago he, like Carrie, attempted to find fame and fortune.

Balzac's Père Goriot was not as autobiographical as Dreiser's Sister Carrie; however, many autobiographical elements were brought out in the novel. For instance, Balzac had two sisters as did Rastignac. His oldest sister's name was Laure, just as Eugène's sister. The two letters that Eugène received were similar to letters that Balzac had received from his sister, Laure, when he was a struggling student in Paris. There was also a strong resemblance of Balzac's quest for love and money and Eugène's quest for love and money. The "de" that Balzac added to his name as a sign of noble birth showed his desire to be a

member of the aristocracy. Eugène's ardent desire was to become accepted into high society.

In addition to using their own lives as background material for the two novels, the two novelist wrote about man and his society. Dreiser became acquainted with Balzac's works through the recommendation of one of his friends, H. B. Wandell. Dreiser had also been encouraged to read Zola, but when he read Balzac, he had not yet read Zola:

> ...Dreiser had been urged to read Zola but had not read him when he wrote Sister Carrie, although he had been considerably impressed by a Zolaesque novel composed by one of his friends on a Chicago newspaper. On the other hand, he had gorged on Balzac as early as 1893.[1]

His reading of Balzac proved very fruitful, for before this time Dreiser had not produced any work which gave promise of success:

> It was probably inevitable that he should eventually discover the novels of balzac and perceive in them the awareness he was looking for. And once he had perceived this, it was certainly inevitable that he should then feel his own views were significant and discern a way to express them.[2]

The greatest influence that Balzac had on Dreiser can be seen in the similarities of plot, theme, character development and style. The plot of Le Père Goriot and the plot of Sister Carrie encompassed three separate stories: the stories of Goriot and Hurstwood, successful businessmen who sank to degradation because of irrational passion; the stories of Eugène and Carrie, two young people who had left their

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[1] Charles Child Walcutt, Theodore Dreiser and the Divided Stream (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), p. 250.

[2] Elias, op. cit., p. 73.

provincial communities to venture out in a metropolis. Carrie went to Chicago to look for work and Eugène went to Paris to become educated. Both of them were faced with experiences which brought about a complete psychological change in them. Carrie became successful in the theatrical world and Eugène became a member of high society. The third stories were the stories of Vautrin and again Hurstwood. They were fugitives fleeing from justice who changed their names to evade the law, but were finally discovered. Hurstwood, in his role as fugitive, was not as ruthless as Vautrin, for he returned the money that he stole, but Vautrin put up a strong fight before being taken to prison. These stories were not commonplace detective stories, for each had a meaning which was greater than the stories themselves. These meanings which underlie each story were money, irrational passion and the corruption of society on each individual.

Money was almost an obsession with all the characters in both novels. To Carrie and Eugène, money was something that everyone had and they must get. Carrie had known poverty and knew that money was the only thing that would keep her from returning to it. To Hurstwood and Goriot money was everything--without it, life was nothing. Goriot's daughters clung to him for money; it was the only thing that could keep them coming to see him. The importance of money to Hurstwood can be seen in his theft. To Mrs. Hurstwood and Anastasie, money was the one success symbol that stood above all others. With it one could be accepted into high society. To Drouet and Delphine, money meant beautiful clothes and prestige.

The characters always lived with the fear of not having money.

They knew well the importance of money and what would happen without it. The lack of money caused Goriot and Hurstwood to wither and die. The theme of money influenced our second theme, irrational passion.

When Goriot's wife died he transferred his love for her to his daughters. His love for them was already infinite, however, it became so momentous that it overwhelmed him. Hurstwood's love for Carrie also grew out of hand; however, we do not endeavor to show that these two loves were the same, but that the consequences of these two passions were the same, degradation. Consequently, these irrational passions caused them to lose all their money and to disregard their moral principles. These passions had played havoc with them, for before they died each one had, momentarily, an ill feeling toward the ones they loved. When it seemed that neither of Goriot's daughters was coming to see him, he said:

> Rien, personne! Mourrai-je donc un chien? Voilà ma récompense, l'abandon. Ce sont des infames, des scélérates; je les abomine, je les maudis; je me relèverai, la nuit, de mon cercuel pour les remaudire...[1]

Hurstwood, while looking at a lithograph of Carrie, uttered aloud, "That's you, wasn't good enough for you was I? Huh!"[2]

Goriot and Hurstwood had been successful businessmen who were supposedly happy. We saw that neither was completely happy, but had made himself completely satisfied with his situation. Goriot was not completely happy because his daughters were ashamed of him. He, like Hurstwood, had resigned himself to contend with it.

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[1] Balzac, op. cit., pp. 285-286.

[2] Dreiser, op. cit., p. 547.

Both Hurstwood and Goriot were successful businessmen who had accumulated a substantial amount of money. They were at one time prominent and respected by society. They were tender and sincere, thus, when they became victims of circumstances beyond their control, they reacted irrationally. At no time did Goriot commit an act of theft as did Hurstwood; nevertheless, Hurstwood's theft was so portrayed that he invoked compassion for him. He, like Goriot, was a victim of a love which he could not control.

The irrationally found in Eugène resembled Carrie's irrationality. They wanted to be a part of the gaiety and comfort of an aristocratic society. Anastasie and Mrs. Hurstwood's irrationality grew out of their desire for prestige. They were vain and selfish and almost always had an ulterior motive for doing anything. Anastasie stole in order to maintain her lover; Mrs. Hurstwood did not directly steal, but she took everything that her husband owned.

Delphine and Drouet's irrationality can be seen in the way that they judged character by clothes. Delphine was self-centered and aggressive. Drouet was not as self-centered as Delphine but he was equally as aggressive as she. Delphine showed her aggressiveness in the way that she asked Eugene to gamble for her. Drouet showed his aggressiveness in the way that he chased after women.

In many instances, the irrationality that was found in each character was brought about because of money. Each character needed money in order to cope with society. The corruption of society, the third theme of the two novels, spread to each individual. It was because of this corruption that so many individuals were insecure and indecisive.

Society impelled individuals toward more money, more success and more pleasure. Sometimes the money, the success and the pleasure that one experienced were bought at the expense of others. The corruption of society on its individuals had made them cold toward the wants and needs of others.

The society of which Dreiser wrote and the society of which Balzac wrote, preached morality, but very few people were moral. Dreiser said:

> Society possesses a conventional standard whereby it judges all things. All men should be good, all women virtuous. Where-fore, villain, hast thou failed?[1]

Balzac voiced the same sentiment:

> Etre fidèle à la vertu, martyre sublime! Bah! tout le monde croit à la vertu, mais qui est vertueux? Les peuples ont la liberté pour idole; mais où est sur la terre un peuple libre?[2]

In the preceding passages, both writers expressed their feelings of a hypocritical society. Balzac and Dreiser believed that men were born good and were corrupted by society. Examples of this can be seen in the reaction toward society that the characters expressed. Eugène wrote home for money that he knew his family did not have, but he felt that he must have money at all cost. Anastasie and Delphine became ashamed of their father, and the clergy provided prayers only at a cost. The major characters in both novels: Carrie, Hurstwood, Drouet, Mrs. Hurstwood, Goriot, Eugène, Anastasie and Delphine, have general

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[1] Dreiser, op. cit., p. 101.

[2] Balzac, op. cit., p. 123.

resemblances or likenesses in addition to their traits of irrationality. Goriot and Hurstwood's actions can be compared, Eugène and Carrie had similar characteristics, Delphine and Drouet can be compared and so can Anastasie and Mrs. Hurstwood.

Hurstwood, like Goriot, was shrewd, clever and a man of authority. In his earlier days he, too, like Goriot, felt financially secure and had a certain amount of humility. Both Hurstwood and Goriot were reduced to degradation because of their irrationality. Goriot's love for his two daughters caused his death and Hurstwood's love for Carrie, likewise, caused his death. Goriot was carried to Potters Field without the presence of either of his daughters. Hurstwood, along with a boat load of other derelicts, was carried to Potter's Field without the presence of Carrie.

Eugène and Carrie were both sympathetic and ambitious. Eugène strove to become a member of high society while Carrie strove to become a success in the theatrical world. They realized their desires. Eugène, after being refused by Anastasie, fell in love with Delphine, Anastasie's sister. Even though, she was married he shared an apartment with her. In like manner, Carrie allowed herself to be cared for by Drouet, but she later fell in love with Hurstwood, Drouet's friend. They were disappointed in the ones whom they loved. Eugène was disappointed in Delphine, when she placed going to a ball before taking care of her sick father. Carrie was disappointed in Hurstwood, when she discovered that he was married. These experiences caused both Eugene and Carrie to undergo complete psychological changes. Eugène was changed from an innocent provincial student to a cynical, shrewd,

cold, calculating man of Paris. Carrie was changed from a poor innocent provincial eighteen year old to a theatrical celebrity of New York.

The first man in Carrie's life was Drouet and the first woman of consequence in Eugène's life was Delphine. Drouet and Delphine were both naive and lighthearted. They would not purposely hurt anyone, but they were overly concerned with being identified with the rich. Drouet associated with the men of means who visited Fitzgerald and Moy's. He firmly believed the saying 'clothes make the man.' Delphine, likewise, had an over-desire for clothes, titles and superficial gaiety. Drouet had more compassion for his fellowman than did Delphine, as seen when he could not bear to see Carrie leave the apartment with no place to go. Even after discovering that she was unfaithful to him, he told her to remain in the apartment that he had provided for her. On many occasions, Delphine showed that she was less compassionate than he, but one very noticeable incident was when she went to Mme de Beauséant's ball when her sick father needed her.

Mrs. Hurstwood and Anastasie de Restaud, unlike Delphine and Eugene, were static characters. They remained the same throughout the course of the novel. Neither of them encountered a psychological change. Anastasie and Mrs. Hurstwood were vain and self-centered. They wanted always to receive and never to give. Anastasie had mistreated her husband, but she still expected to get his wealth. Mrs. Hurstwood took control of Hurstwood's property. She did not feel remorseful about losing Hurstwood because she felt that a settlement of a separation would give her more money. They were both cold and

calculating. Anastasie begged her father for money, when he was on his death-bed. Mrs. Hurstwood locked her husband out of the house, when she suspected that he was unfaithful to her. She succeeded in marrying her daughter to a rich man so that she could be admitted into the society of the rich.

In Père Goriot and Sister Carrie Eugène and Carrie were the only two characters who were changed as a result of their experiences. The other characters remained the same, they learned no more, they were not shocked by society nor by its corruption.

The titles of the two novels are parallel in structure: Le Père Goriot and Sister Carrie. The "père" is a term meaning "old" rather than "father" as the literal translation into English. The "sister" had a similar meaning to the "père." Alfred Kazin explained the "sister" in the following manner:

> Sister Carrie is a homely name; there is no suggestion of the girl with the laughing eye and the glowing cheek, and there is no thought of rustling silk and dancing lace. Instead, there comes into the mind the picture of a plain woman, plain in the sense of being of the great common people.[1]

Dreiser did not have the eloquent power of description as did Balzac; however, this may or may not be a destructive criticism. There are some who feel that Balzac's minute descriptions become boring and are often quite irrelevant. Following are descriptions of Mme Vauquer's boardinghouse and Minnie's flat. Following is an excerpt from Balzac's description of the boardinghouse:

> Elle est plaquée de buffets gluants sur lequels sont

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[1] Kazin and Shapiro, op. cit., p. 53.

> des carafes échancrées, ternies, des ronds de moire métallique, des piles d'assiettes en procelaine épaisse, à bords bleus fabriquées à Tournai. Dans un angle est placée une boîte à cases numérotées qui sert à garder les serviettes, ou tachées ou vineuses, de chaque pensionnaire. Il s'y rencontre de ces meubles indestructibles, poscrits partout, mais placés là comme le sont les débris de la civilisation aux Incurables. Vous y verriez un baromètre à capucin qui sort quand il pleut, des gravures exécrables qui ôtent l appétit, toutes encardrées en bois nois verni à filetsdorés; un cartel en écaille incrustée de cuivre; un poêle vert, des quinquets d'Argand où la poussière se combine avec l'huile, une longue table couverte en toile cirée assez grasse pour qu'un facétieux externe y écrive son non en se servant de son doigt comme de style, des chaises estropiées, de petits paillassons piteux en sparterie qui se déroule toujours sans se perdre jamais, puis des chaufferettes misérables à trous cassés, a charnières défaites, dont le bois se carbonise. Pour expliquer combien ce mobilier est vieux, crevassé, pourri, tremblant, rongé, manchot, borgne, invalide, expirant, il faudrait en faire une description qui retarderait trop l'intérêt de cette histoire, et que les gens pressés ne pardonneraient pas. Le carreau rouge est plein de vallées produites par le frottement ou par les mises en couleur. Enfin, là regne la misère sans poésie; une misère économe, concentrée, râpée. Si elle n'a pas de fange encore, elle a des taches; si elle n'a ni trous ni haillons, elle va tomber en pourriture.[1]

Dreiser wrote:

> The walls of the room were discordantly papered. The floors were covered with matting and the hall laid with a thin rag carpet. One could see that the furniture was of that poor hurriedly patched quality sold by the installment houses.[2]

Dreiser did not reach the wordiness, the minute detailed description of Balzac, but he definitely equaled him in Hurstwood's death scene when he described Hurstwood's suicide. Note this scene as compared

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[1] Balzac, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

[2] Dreiser, op. cit., p. 13.

with the description of Goriot's death:

> Hurstwood laid down his fifteen cents and crept off with weary steps toward his alloted room. It was a digny affair-wooden, dusty, hard. A small gas-jet furnished sufficient light for so rueful a corner..After a few moments in which he reviewed nothing, but merely hesitated, he turned the gas on again, but applied no match... When the odour reached his nostrils, he quit his attitude and fumbled for the bed. "What's the use?" he said, weakly, as he stretched himself to rest.[1]

Balzac's description of Goriot's death was thus:

> Le dernier soupir de ce père devait être un soupir de joie. Ce soupir fut l'expression de toute sa vie, il se trompait encore. Le père Goriot fût pieusement replacé sur son grabat. A compter de ce moment, as physionomie garda la douloureuse empriente du combat qui se livrait entre la mort et la vie dans une machine qui n'avait plus cette espèce de conscience cérébrale d'où résulte le sentiment du plasir et de la douleur pour l'être humain. Ce n'était plus qu'une question de temps pour la destruction.[2]

In addition to the detailed description of his setting Balzac presented the physical characteristics in detail so as to serve as a partial explanation of their behavior. When Goriot moved to the boardinghouse, Balzac described him thus:

> Quoique le larmier des yeux de Goriot fût retourné, gonflé, pendant, ce qui l'obligeat à les essuyer assez fréquemment...D'ailleurs, son mollet charnu, saillant, pronostiquait, autant que son long nez carré, des qualités morales...et que confirmait la face lunaire et naivement niaise de bonhomme. Ce devait être une bête solidement bâtie, capable de dépenser tout son esprit en sentiment. Ses cheveux, en ailes de pigeon, que le coiffeur de l'Ecole polytechnique vint lui poudrer tous les matins, dessinaient cinq pointes sur son front bas, et décoraient bien sa figure. Quoique un peu rustaud, il était si bien tiré à quatre épingles, il prenait si richement son tabac, il le humait en homme si sur de toujours avoir sa tabatière

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1 Dreiser, op. cit., p. 554.

2 Balzac, op. cit., p. 295.

pleine de macouba...[1]

Dreiser, unlike Balzac, placed more emphasis on the dress and actions of his characters rather than on their physical features.

In Balzac's description of his characters, he used many vivid adjectives and commonplace dialogs that added much to the realistic element of the work. The following dialog between Sylvie and Christophe was an example of this:

> --Sylvie, dit Christophe en mouillant sa première rôtie, monsieur Vautrin, qu'est un bon homme tout de même, a encore vi deux personnes cette nuit. Si madame s'en inquiétait, ne faudrait rien lai dire.
>
> --Vous a-t-il donné quelque chose?
>
> --Il m'a donné cent sous pour son mois, une manière de me dire; "Tais-toi."
>
> --Sauf lui et madame Coutoure, qui ne sont pas regardants, les autres voudraient nous retire de la main quache ce qu'il nous donnerat de la main droite au jour de l'an, dit Sylvie.
>
> --Encore, qu'est-ce qu'ils donnent! fit. Christophe, une méchante pièce, et de cent sous. Voilà depuis deux ans le père Goriot qui fait ses souliers lui-même. Ce grigou de Poiret se passe de cirage, et le boirait plutôt que de la mettre à ses savates quant au gringalet d'étudiant, il me donne quarante sous. Quarante sous ne payent pas mes brosses, et il vend ses vieux habits pardessus le marché. Que baraque?[2]

Dreiser also used commonplace dialogue to enrich his descriptions. The conversation that follows was between Carrie and Hurstwood when he invested in a saloon:

> --I dont think I'll ever be able to do much with

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[1] Ibid., pp. 18-19.

[2] Balzac, op. cit., p. 41.

Shaughnessy.

> --"What's the matter?" said Carrie. "Oh, he's a slow, greedy 'mick'! He won't agree to anything to improve the place, and it won't ever pay without it.
>
> --Can't you make him? said Carrie.
>
> --No; I've tried. The only thing I can see, if I want to improve is to get hold of a place of my own.[1]

Some critics have said that Dreiser's works are troublesome because they tell too much of what may be implied and that they are carelessly punctuated. An example of telling what maybe implied can be seen in the following. This passage described Carrie's condition when Drouet left her:

> Sunday passed with equal doubts, worries, assurances and heaven knows what vagaries of mind and spirit.[2]

"The heaven knows what vagaries of mind and spirit" was unnecessary, particularly since it can be assumed that she suffered because she did not know what to do or where to go.

On occasions Dreiser and Balzac's sentences were long and involved. Dreiser wrote:

> She gave him credit for his good looks, his generous feelings, and even, in fact failed to recollect his egotism when he was absent; but she could not feel any binding influence keeping her for him as against all others.[3]

Balzac wrote:

> Vous y verriez un baromètre à capucin qui sort quand

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[1] Dreiser, op. cit., p. 365.

[2] Dreiser, op. cit., p. 269.

[3] Ibid., p. 130.

> il pleut, des gravures exécrables qui ôtent l'appétit, toutes encadrées en bois noir verni a filets dorés; un cartel en écaille incrustée de cuivre; un poêle vert, des quinquets d'Argand où la poussière se combine avec l'huile, une longue table couverte en toile cirée assez, grasse pour qu'un facétieux externe y'écrive son nom en se servant de son doigt comme de style des chaises estropiées, de petits paillassons piteux en sparterie qui se déroule toujours sans se perdre jamais, puis des chaufferettes misérables à trous cassés, à charnieres defaites, dont le bois se carbonise.[1]

Dreiser gave each of his chapters a title. In most of the titles Dreiser used figures of speech. Personification was used in many of the titles, for example, the title of chapter four, "The Spendings of Fancy: Facts Answer with Sneers" and chapter seven, "The Lure of the Material: Beauty Speaks for Itself."

Balzac used humor, for example: 'Venus du Père Lachaise,' mal de mère;' puns: 'entre la poire et le fromage,' 'trois grands...ils ont de la barbe;' figurative words: 'joliment ficelées,' se cognait la tete contre le mur;' coined words: 'casquettiferes,' 'se toilette;' elliptical expressions: 'fourche' for 'fourche du diable,' 'plus de cornichons' for 'il n'y a;' hackneyed expressions, 'bonne femme au fond qui ont eu des malheurs,' 'sorter les pieds en avant;' slang: 'Ca te la coupe,' 'tortiller de l'oeil;' colloquialism: 'une supposition que' for 'supposant que,' 'vous en avec donc trente-six des filles.' Many words and expressions were incorrectly used to show the illiteracy of the person speaking. Of course, this made the characters more realistic, for example: Mme Vauquer used 'qu'est' instead of 'qui est' and 'C'est des duperies' instead of 'Ce sont.'

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[1] Balzac, op. cit., p. 9.

Similarities can be seen in Balzac's style and Dreiser's style; however, there was little or no humor used in Sister Carrie. Dreiser used the Old English spelling for many words: 'vigour,' 'odour,' 'gayety,' 'centre,' 'realise,' etc. A few of the words used were French, 'reconnoitre,' 'Drouet,' 'attache,' 'cuisine,' 'blase,' for example. Dreiser, like Balzac, used slang: 'masher,' 'she took up with him,' 'greenbacks,' etc. He also coined verbs from nouns, as did Balzac, for example: 'moneyed,' 'buoyed,' 'schooled.' He freely used figurative language, for example: 'putting worth, goodness, and distinction in a dress suit, leaving all the unlovely qualities in overalls and jumper' and 'the city has its cunning wiles.' His use of colloquialism can be seen in 'you're not a typewriter, are you?' and 'let me have your grip.' Dreiser occasionally used many unnecessary words, for example, 'conferring together.'

Irony in Sister Carrie can be seen when Hurstwood ignored a beggar who asked him for the price of a bed. It was also ironic that Carrie felt so much sympathy for Goriot, and at the same time Hurstwood was encountering similar situations.

To some, Balzac's language lacks power and imagination. Nevertheless, Balzac made use of the figures of speech in his writing. Personification was used in the following passage:

> Le lendemain régnait à Paris un de ces épais brouillards qui l'enveloppent et l'embrument si bien, que les gens les plus exacts sont trompés sur le temps...[1]

As we have noted, both Dreiser and Balzac added animal similes to

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[1] Balzac, op. cit., p. 40.

their description of characters. In most cases their comparisons were in direct similes; however, some were presented metaphorically. Goriot was liken to a dog while Hurstwood was depicted as a spider in his earlier life, but when he sank to degradation he and a line of derelicts were compared to dogs. Sister Carrie was liken to a sheep, Eugène was compared to a lion and sometimes to an eagle. Drouet was a moth who was seen fluttering wherever the gay well-dressed were gathered. Delphine possessed the gaiety of a nightingale.

Bianchon and Sven were not only given identical personal traits but almost the same words were used in describing them. Note the close similarity of the two passages. Balzac said of Bianchon:

> --Kt kt kt kt! fit Bianchon en faisant claquer sa langue contre son palais, comme pour exciter un cheval.[1]

Dreiser said of Sven:

> The only implication of his thoughts came in the form of a little clicking sound made by his tongue; the sound some people make when they wish to urge on a horse.[2]

Mrs. Hurstwood possessed the qualities of an animal who sensed oncoming troubles. Anastasie was referred to as a throughbred horse, graceful, elegant and high-spirited.

Balzac and Dreiser never judged their characters regardless to their irrationality. They felt that each human being was led by instinct rather than by reason. Therefore, there was no need to criticize man because principles did not exist.

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[1] Balzac, op. cit., p. 165.

[2] Dreiser, op. cit., p. 84.

The styles of the two writers did not, in many instances, represent the best in literary form. They have been called cumbersome and wordy. If this were true of Balzac, it was so because he wrote hurriedly and without editing his works. Some felt that Dreiser did not have the power nor the literary bent to attain eloquence in writing; however, these writers must not be too rigidly criticized for their style because it was not their intentions to give much thought to form and pattern.

The outstanding similarities of Le Père Goriot and Sister Carrie: parallelism of titles, the similarities of plots, the description of characters by the use of animal similes, the strong relationship between the personality traits of the characters in both novels, and the unity of themes reveal the great extent to which Dreiser was influenced by Balzac. These similarities prove that Theodore Albert Dreiser's reach, identifying himself with Balzac's characters, far exceeded his grasp. Matthiessen stated that Dreiser, after reading Balzac's works, aspired to become one of his heroes. The similarities found in the two works attest to the fact Dreiser became more than one of Balzac's heroes. He became one of Balzac's apostles. It is evident that Dreiser could not have become one of Balzac's heroes without being subjected to the Balzacian influence. This study further supports the idea that Theodore Albert Dreiser earned the right to be called America's Balzac.

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